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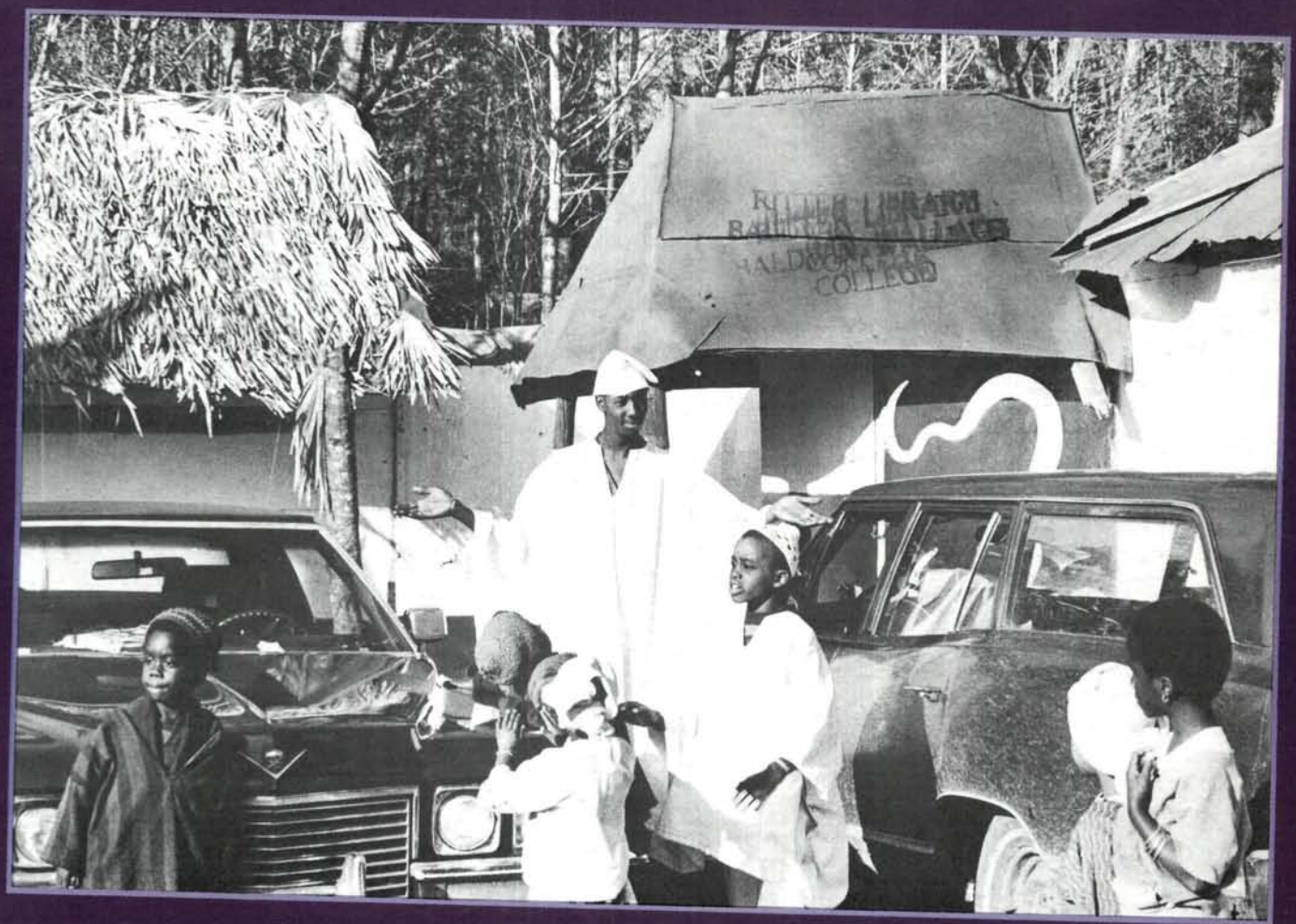

A Kingdom in South Carolina

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TRB

from Washington
May 27, 1978

A Bigger Bang

I've always had an odd partiality for the human race. The thought of a small dead planet spinning endlessly through space with no people on it after a nuclear war oppresses me. No passengers—no birds singing; no children playing. Ugh! And yet the nightmare can't be lightly dismissed; the burden of armaments is growing all the time; even now it's questionable, if all the 50,000 nuclear bombs possessed by the United States and the Soviets were detonated at once, whether the earth would be habitable. And we have only just started.

Covering D-Day off the Normandy coast, June 6, 1944, in the US cruiser *Quincy*, we were pretty proud of our big bombs, called "block-busters." But the bang that comes from one of our new nuclear bombs is a quarter of a billion times greater. Block-busters? These are city-destroyers! Their aggregate explosive power is now equivalent to several tons of TNT for each person on earth.

These reflections come from reading the fourth annual report on "World Military and Social Expenditures—1978," by Ruth Leger Sivard (32 pages, $2.50; WMSE Publications, Leesburg, Va.). It is an independent analysis sponsored by six private foundations. It is issued just as the largest official gathering on disarmament that has ever assembled meets in New York—the UN's special session on disarmament, to run from May 23 through June 28. Will anything come from it but words? It is not too likely.

Mrs. Sivard is former chief of the economics division of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. She started *World Military Expenditures* while there. To make a point she published tables of world expenditures for health and education alongside those for arms and bombs. Defense Secretary Laird complained that this made it harder for him to get his budget through Congress and the Nixon administration ordered the publication stopped. Mrs. Sivard retired and continued the annual report with the aid of supporting groups including the Rockefeller Foundation. It is the equivalent, in some ways, of the annual survey by the International Peace Research Institute at Stockholm.

All right then—ready for some statistics? The global arms bill is now $400 billion annually in public funds. There are 23 million men actually under arms with a back-up force of perhaps the same number. The arms race is out of control, stimulating price inflation (by using scarce resources for non-commercial goods), contributing to unemployment and poverty.

—The world spends almost a million dollars a minute on arms—20 times more than the industrialized nations spend in aid to help the poorer countries.

—The average family pays more in taxes to support the world arms race than to educate its children.

—Nuclear bomb inventories of the two superpowers, already big enough to destroy every city on earth seven times over, are growing; the leaders are not satisfied; they may have an unobtainable goal but they want to be able to destroy each city nine or 10 times over, and are busily turning out three bombs a day.

Says Mrs. Sivard: "Modern technology has made it possible to deliver a bomb across the world in minutes; women in rural areas in Asia and Africa still walk several hours a day for the family's water supply."

Had enough? It's boring, but it is probably worth spending five minutes a year in contemplating the consequences of armaments on a small, frightened planet where nobody is in charge and where everybody must guard against his neighbor.

Way back in the 1920s an isolationist senator named Gerald P. Nye of North Dakota set out to show that the gullible United States had been egged into Woodrow Wilson's war by the munition makers. He held dramatic hearings. The slogan was, "Take the profits out of war," and it was believed that we would have peace, probably forever, if we controlled the "Merchants of Death." How perplexing it all is; the United States government itself is now the world's chief arms exporter; according to the Pentagon, in 1960 through 1977 we sent arms worth perhaps $71 billion to 161 countries. It was good business. Some of the smallest, hungriest countries were most avid for arms; we sent or withheld them according to our favor.

Speakers at the UN disarmament conference are apt to mention this and the field will be ripe for propaganda, with Russia prepared to lead the way. The Soviets have been selling arms, too, to their clients. The US, Russia, France and Britain account for more than four-fifths of all military sales. The munitions trade is changing; it is no longer a kind of used-car munitions market, but often latest model, state-of-the-art technology. In 1975, 95 nations took major weapons systems. Only one country got long-range, surface-to-air missiles in 1958; in 1975 it was 27. Last Monday the Senate approved the administration's deal with Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt—$5 billion.

This is all done, of course, to defend the United States. We have got so much nuclear security by now that we are no longer safe. The two great powers, the US and the USSR, representing only 11 percent of the world's population, have shaped the military competition since World War II. A mutual distrust bordering on the pathological drives them on. The formula is crazy: an adequate defense means an offense sufficient to deter attack; this must be constructed on worst-case assumptions of the opposing threat. As the enemy responds in kind, the reality of the threat automatically grows—the dog comes closer and closer to catching its tail. It is obvious that it can't last. Will war come? Only last week the New China News Agency, speaking of Russia, came out with the statement that "War will inevitably break out some day."

The average person, all over the world, accepts this incredible situation calmly. It is regarded as the normal lot of the earth dweller. One billion people—a quarter of the earth's population—go to bed hungry at night. It is in their countries, the report shows, that since 1960 the proportion of military expenditures has risen most.

The report is factual, statistical, rather dull. There is little editorializing. In it you discover curious facts. Developing countries—the ones with high birthrate, short life expectancy and few doctors—invest more public revenue in arms than in education and health combined. Another item: for the estimated cost of a new mobile intercontinental missile (the MX), 50 million malnourished children in developing countries could be adequately fed, 65,000 health centers opened, 340,000 primary schools built.

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Correspondence

Mr. Davies replies

To the editors:

In the course of reviewing a book of mine (*One Half of Robertson Davies*, reviewed in *TNR*, Apr. 15), in which attention was given to several aspects of Canadian life as it is at present, Joyce Carol Oates asserts strongly that we Canadians are making ourselves ridiculous in laying claim to a national literature. This may well be so; all manifestations of nationalism are likely to lurch into absurdity. However, it should be said that we have to be more vehement than is strictly prudent in order to persuade the world at large, and some of our own citizens, that we have any literature of any value whatever. It is little more than a century ago that the U.S. was in the same predicament, and English patronage was summed up in Sydney Smith's query, "Who reads an American book?" The situation in which Canada finds herself now is not less significant for us than the Civil War was for you, and we hope to emerge strengthened in several respects, one of which will be the legitimate recognition at home and beyond our shores of whatever worthy literature we possess.

The expression, "Canada's leading man of letters," which Ms. Oates objects to so strongly when applied to myself, pleases me as little as it does her. Not only does it ignore the claims of better men; it is itself a term somewhat outmoded and comic, belonging to the era of spats and piqué vest-edgings. But when it is used of me by people who mean it kindly, am I to be churlish and snarl? No, but I may be grateful to Ms. Oates, who has done so on my behalf.

About her strictures on my personal character it would be foolish for me to protest. We are not acquainted, and as she says she has read comparatively little of my work it must be assumed she has made her discoveries about me by divination. Critics have often laid claim to this power, and when Ms. Oates portrays me as a garrulous, self-delighted mountebank, and a covert undervaluer of women, I can only hang my head in shame, for when has any man known himself as well as a richly gifted observer knows him?

But when she says that I pay no heed to my fellow-writers in Canada, I must reply that for twenty years before Ms. Oates came to our country I was a weekly book-reviewer of some influence, and every Canadian book of that period passed through my hands. I applied to these the standards I used in judging other books, and took pride in praising what many of them achieved, as chroniclers of life as it is lived in a country which I do not think Ms. Oates knows as well as she thinks she does.

Desolated as I am by her opinion, I have some hope that Ms. Oates may not have divined the whole truth about me. She confides to your readers that "Davies is said to regret that public floggings and hangings have been discarded." Who says it, I wonder? Whence comes this portrait of Davies, the Hangman's Friend? It is true that I sometimes take extreme views on controversial subjects in order to get the goat of campus sorceresses and others who will believe anything they hear, provided it be ugly enough; I have never been able to resist tormenting people who have no sense of humour.

Considering the character that has been ascribed to me by Ms. Oates it would be disingenuous if I were to subscribe myself "Yours sincerely" or "Yours faithfully," so I am content to remain,

Yours, writhing in deserved ignominy,
Robertson Davies
Toronto, Canada

In rebuttal

To the editors:

In your issue of April 8, 1978, Mr. Henry Fairlie writes as follows: ". . . Yet the popular voice again and again comes to their [the conservatives'] rescue, often providing the only dependable support for their causes. One could go through the pages of the *National Review*, which really ought to be the voice of quixotic aristocratic sentiments, and show that nevertheless it is always ready to point to the popular voice in the polls for support. It is sad and affecting, but the Buckleys will stoop to conquer. We are told that this is what 'the people' want and believe, which is hardly the ground on which one would expect a conservative to take a stand."

One could go through the pages of the *National Review* and conclude that Mr. Fairlie is off his rocker. On the unusual occasions when we cite the polls, it is generally for the sake of identifying as of journalistic interest a trend. We do not consult them in quest of sanction, let alone authority. Perhaps Mr. Fairlie has us confused with another journal, concerning the identity of which I am uncurious.

Wm. F. Buckley, Jr.
Editor
National Review

Break the habit

To the editors:

Many church groups are also advocating a boycott of Ugandan coffee for the same reasons advocated by you, namely the brutality of the regime ("Another Cup of Coffee," *TNR*, May 13). Your analogy to the German Holocaust is not apt, neither does it advance your argument. Most of the Jews were killed toward the end of the war when some of us were, indeed, doing something about it, and many of us still bear the wounds from the effort.

No matter how much we may regret the situation in Uganda, and no matter how much we may individually wish to do something about it, government action is quite another thing. Has it ever occurred to you that the government cannot just go around and constitutionally exert whatever humane effort it wishes? Foreign aid and all of that sort of activity are tenuous at best. The only way any of it is justified is that it is connected with the defense effort. Citizens should not be taxed and money spent for non-governmental and unconstitutional purposes.

Lee Smith
Dallas, Texas

A way of life

To the editors:

May I remind Eugene McCarthy that each of the points he made concerning the singular nature of baseball ("Another Good Season," *TNR*, Apr. 22) may be equally applied to the game of cricket? To take his first point only: cricket dominates time to such an extent that test matches between Australia and England have lasted as long as six days. In this context, if baseball can be called a "pastime," then cricket can be called a "way of life."

Peter R. Wigley
Houston, Texas

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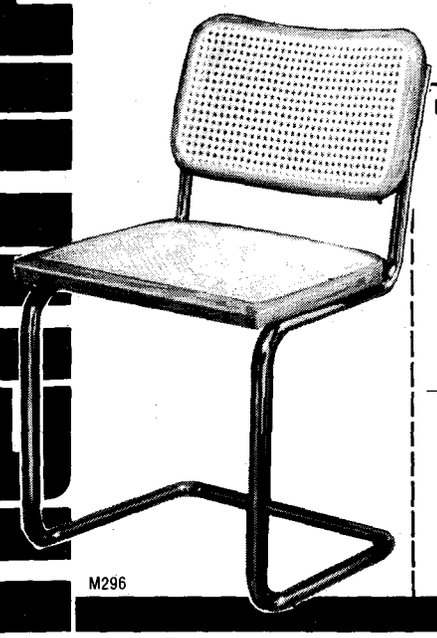

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 27, 1978

Talking Tough Versus Acting Tough

Someone asked President Carter a good question recently and the answer didn't get enough attention. What does the United States plan to do in practice to counter the Soviet-Cuban influence in Africa, besides your warnings?

The president replied: "I have let Brezhnev know directly from me to him, plus through his own ambassador and Secretary of State Vance when he was there [in Moscow], that the Soviets' continuation of intrusion into Africa, with military forces, was a major obstacle to trust on the part of the American people that the Soviets want peace and want to have a successful detente effort."

Besides warnings, in other words, the United States has responded with warnings. Well, not quite. Carter went on to describe some specific actions the United States has taken: "We have aroused as much as we can the developing nations' and the non-aligned nations' leaders to intercede with the Soviets and with Cuba. . . . We have done all we could to strengthen the Organization of African Unity and encourage the leaders therein to move aggressively to resolve the disputes that might exist between African people, among themselves, and not call on the Cubans or Soviets from outside."

Carter reiterated his basic faith that black Africa eventually would realize how moral the United States is—religious, non-racist, dedicated to economic development—compared to the Soviet Union. He implied that, in the long run, Africa will side with us and there is nothing to worry about.

Carter's response indicated some shift in attitude during his first 15 months as president. At the outset, Carter dismissed any "inordinate fear of communism" and attempted to avoid confrontation with the Soviets in Africa. At every turn, the United States showed restraint, hoping that the Soviets and their allies would do the same. But there has been no matching restraint. The number of Cubans in Africa has steadily increased. Now there are 50,000 Cuban soldiers and civilians, and there is every indication that Fidel Castro intends to expand his influence into the Middle East. He already has advisers in South Yemen, possibly threatening new military action against Oman, and reportedly he has offered help to the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon. The coup in Afghanistan might well lead to Communist-inspired disruptions in Pakistan and Iran.

The Carter administration seems to have abandoned its "not to worry" first year stance. Now it seems worried, but without any idea what to do. For some weeks the administration has been relying on what amounts to international jawboning to influence the Soviet Union. President Carter has pointed fingers at the Soviets, called them names, exposed their cynicism and, simultaneously, warned them that there will be consequences if they persist in their behavior.

The problem is that jawboning needs backup. A business executive doesn't roll back prices and a union leader doesn't show wage restraint simply because he's asked politely. In the international realm, the same applies and only more so. President Carter has not convinced the world that he is able and willing to punish anyone—certainly anyone powerful—for violating US interests, and so his jawboning is to no avail. Carter had no sooner issued his latest set of warnings than Katangan rebels launched a new attack from Angola into Zaire's copper-producing Shaba province. The rebels are trained and equipped by Cubans and operate from territory in Angola basically under Cuban security control. On the very same day as the attack on Zaire, Ethiopian forces, with Soviet and Cuban assistance, reportedly launched a major offensive against the secessionist province of Eritrea.

We believe that the United States eventually will be compelled to act decisively against this tide of Soviet and Cuban advances. And we think that Zaire is as good a place as any in Africa to do so. President Carter should offer to transport an anti-Communist force of

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Africans—Moroccans again, or perhaps even Egyptians—to assist Zaire. Carter should not limit US aid to non-lethal items. He should issue a challenge to Congress—possibly by requesting a supplemental appropriation—forcing our representatives to decide whether they want this country to respond to Soviet and Cuban expansionism, or to acquiesce in it. We believe that Carter will find more support for a US policy of active resistance than he thinks.

Zaire is a good place to act because, this time, Cuban-aided forces have violated an international border and threatened the cohesion of an established state. Previously, the Cubans have had something of an excuse for intervention: in Angola, a civil war was under way; in Ethiopia, the government asked assistance in repelling an invasion and in putting down a rebellion. But in Zaire, the Cuban-trained Katangans are trying to seize the country's major economic asset, its copper. They might cause the collapse of the central government, leading to tribal conflict and dissolution of the country. By intervening, the United States would be defending a principle deeply cherished by all black African governments: the sanctity of established international boundaries.

It would be wise for the United States to act now in Zaire, in order to establish that race is not the basis upon which the US decides whether to play a military role in Africa. Unless the Soviets and Cubans are deterred or out-maneuvered, eventually they are likely to intervene in the war for control of Rhodesia on the side of the all-black Patriotic Front guerrilla force. The United States, now striving mightily to avoid an all-out war, may be driven by domestic pressures to defend a Rhodesian government in which whites are heavily involved—though, we must hope, not dominant. It would be disastrous if it appeared that American aid only is available when white skins are in jeopardy. Even before the Communist tide reaches Rhodesia, the South Africans may be moved to intervene if we do not. Certainly it would be better for us to intervene sooner, and on our own terms, rather than later in an apparent alliance with the apartheid regime.

It is also necessary to stop these Communist initiatives at their source in Moscow. The Soviets want to maintain detente with the United States on matters of trade and arms negotiations, and simultaneously to advance the cause of "liberation" and "revolution" all over the world. Such inconsistencies are possible in dictatorships, but not in democracies. Inevitably the American people will demand a consistent policy toward the Soviet Union. Even now, Soviet and Cuban activity in Africa has all but ruined the chances for Senate ratification of a strategic arms treaty.

President Carter has been trying to warn the Soviets about this, but either they do not care or they do not believe him. In a way, it is hard to take Carter seriously, because he seems so eager for SALT. He also keeps initiating new negotiations with the Soviets, such as Agriculture Secretary Bob Berglund's efforts to sell them more grain and Carter's own proposed agreement on conventional arms sales.

Last week, former secretary of state Henry Kissinger proposed what is coming to be the only sensible course for the United States to take in dealing with the Soviets. "I think," he said, that "the Soviet Union must be told that it has to choose between negotiations with us, or an imperial policy in Africa. It cannot have it both ways." We hope that Moscow gets the message.

Doctors and Truck Drivers

Doctors have been stung recently to find that they are suffering an ignominy that was formerly visited upon plumbers, truck drivers and garbage men. Government economists have begun to look closely at their income and ask pointed questions about how and why they make as much as they do. The economists have not gone so far as to say that doctors make more than they ought to, nor have they attempted to use "jawboning"—a form of public harassment—to persuade doctors to lower their fees. But the White House did publish a report by the wage and price council earlier this year which discussed the subject in a sharply critical tone. It found that, on the average, doctors make more than any other professionals and have succeeded in making their income grow faster than any other group. We described these and other findings not long ago ("The Doctors' Lot," *TNR*, April 22) and provoked some angry mail.

One persistent theme in the letters we've received is the belief that doctors are more valuable to society than other people and therefore entitled to a higher income. The assertion is all the more engaging because the ones who make it are doctors themselves. One correspondent claimed that the doctor is "a greater economic good for the society" because he "creates two or three jobs in his office and even more in the hospital." The point is at least arguable. While it's true that fewer people are fit to be doctors than truck drivers, we cannot imagine that society could get along without truck drivers any more than it could without doctors. It's difficult to say how much more valuable a doctor is—if at all—given that neither he nor the truck driver could survive independently. Furthermore, if the test of social value were the ability to create jobs for other people, then the most valuable institutions in the country would be the Departments of Defense and HEW. The claim of superior social value must be taken with a grain of salt.

The other common criticism of the White House study is that it failed to take into account the exhausting nature of the doctor's work. According to this line of reasoning, doctors work harder than truck drivers, first by submitting to the education and

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training process and later by working long hours. Therefore they deserve to make more. As one writer put it, "Based on the mean income of $53,700 per year, a doctor in private practice working 80 hours per week receives only $4,700 per year more than a teamster working the same number of hours, which is not an exceptional return on eight years of additional education and several years of low paid residency." The catch is that the average doctor does not work 80 hours a week. According to an American Medical Association estimate made in 1975, an average doctor worked about 52 hours a week. The mean income of doctors, according to the government study, is $62,799. Blue-collar workers do not as a rule have the freedom to decide when or for how many hours they will work. But it is safe to say that many of them would be willing to trade places with the doctor working the 80-hour week, while not many doctors would trade places with them, no matter how high the pay.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Life

Westerners are dismayed at the prospect that the military rulers of Pakistan will go through with their apparent plan to execute former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This dismay derives from a belief that, whatever happened in 1974, and however apparently straightforward the judicial process by which Mr. Bhutto was convicted, Pakistan's new rulers want him dispatched for reasons that have nothing to do with justice and everything to do with politics.

After five and a half years as prime minister, Bhutto was overthrown last July in a military coup led by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, who now rules the country under a regime of martial law. In September he personally authorized Bhutto's arrest on the charge of murder. Bhutto was accused of conspiring to murder a political opponent, Ahmad Raza Kasuri. Men with machine guns ambushed Kasuri in November 1974. Kasuri escaped but his father, Nawab Mohammad Ahmed Khan, was killed. A Pakistani court tried Bhutto, convicted him and sentenced him in March to death by firing squad. After an initial cynical reluctance, Bhutto has appealed the verdict and death sentence to the Pakistani Supreme Court, which is expected to rule some time next month. After that he may also petition for clemency to the president of Pakistan. Bhutto's supporters are not optimistic.

The Pakistani judiciary has an admirable tradition of political independence, but there are some oddities surrounding its prosecution of the former prime minister. Without trying to second-guess the court's factual findings, we do think these circumstances suggest a foregone conclusion. When General Zia authorized Bhutto's arrest, he declared he personally had seen incriminating documentary evidence, and he called Bhutto "an evil genius Machiavelli in 1977." In the weeks before the verdict, Zia's men summarily arrested hundreds of Bhutto's supporters, including his wife and daughter. Then earlier this month General Zia appointed the chief justice of the Supreme Court as acting president of Pakistan. This means that the man who will rule on Bhutto's appeal is now part of the regime that overthrew him, and is also the person who will decide on any petition for clemency.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is a debonair and charismatic man, educated at UCLA and Oxford, with many intimate connections among the Western elite. His successors suspect, probably correctly, that this explains much of the worldwide clamor to save his life. The irony of protests based on a general abhorrence of capital punishment, when applied to a former national leader with some reputation for ruthlessness and one who certainly did not make abolition a central plank of his own political platform, is not lost on them.

But what they are really up to in arresting, prosecuting and possibly executing Bhutto is not lost on the rest of the world. Even in defeat and even in jail Bhutto is Pakistan's dominant political figure. As long as he is alive he will be a thorn in the side of the Zia regime. If he is killed, the world will know this is why. It would be foolish for General Zia to attempt to solve an internal political problem by causing his country an international political disaster.

On the Hill

Mock Heroics

Several senators were buckling on armor last week to play Horatio-at-the-bridge against an onslaught of labor unionists. They went into battle on May 17 against the "Labor Law Reform Act of 1978," a bill described by its union backers as a modest clean-up measure, and by the organized Horatios as a dangerous power grab that must be stopped at any cost. The drama, fascinating to almost no one but the parties in combat, will paralyze the US Senate for weeks in a clangor of empty debate while important work goes untended.

The tale of heroic resistance to the labor bill is more amusing than arousing. Few heroes have been as well rehearsed for battle as these. Few have had the field so well groomed or the weapons so well polished. The three who have volunteered to lead the resistance are Republican Senators Orrin Hatch of Utah, John Tower of Texas and Jesse Helms of North Carolina, men of the hard political right. They are not alone. What makes their cause interesting is that it is not being led by men of quixotic integrity at all, but by the fattest and

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smoothest organizations in the country. It will be a neat trick indeed if the propaganda machinery backing these senators succeeds in getting them cast as underdogs.

The real leader in the fight against the labor bill is the US Chamber of Commerce, the largest business lobby in the nation. It is allied in this struggle with the National Association of Manufacturers—a big business lobby—and by the Associated General Contractors—an organization of builders, 42 percent of whom use nonunion labor. When asked about the campaign to stop this bill, the general counsel of the Chamber of Commerce said "it would be impossible for me to even estimate" how much had been spent lobbying in opposition. The Chamber's budget is not broken down into neat subject categories. The counsel added that even if he could find the numbers, he probably wouldn't make them public. One estimate, not denied by the Chamber, has it that the business lobbies together have spent more than five million dollars on this project. The money has paid for newspaper ads, letters and telegrams, trips to Capitol Hill, research and all the other minor chores that go into a propaganda campaign. Briefing books were drawn up for friendly senators to use during the debate. One large item was a national opinion poll which asked some vaguely pertinent questions and concluded that most people think labor leaders are too powerful. In addition, the Chamber commissioned 14 small polls in the states of senators who are thought to be wavering in their loyalty to business. The Chamber also hired econometrician Pierre Rinfret to study the bill and conclude that it would cause inflation if passed. His conclusions are explained in a 21-page written text, produced for a fee of about $4700.

The unions have been active too. Victor Kamber, director of the AFL-CIO's campaign in support of the bill, said the unions have spent about $2.5 million so far. With this money they bought their own small opinion poll and a small economic study (costing one-tenth what the Rinfret study cost). They have bought ads, printed pamphlets, sent out telegrams and letters and done just about everything the Chamber has done, but in a less expensive and less polished way. Kamber said the unions had not intended to spend so much, because they had thought the bill was so bland it wouldn't provoke much opposition. Then the business lobbyists began to spend their millions, and the AFL-CIO felt constrained to reply in kind. According to Kamber, the propaganda war had been escalated at each step by the business groups. He said the distortions and tricks of the other side have forced the unions to spend money fighting junk with junk.

The investment has grown so large on both sides that the fight has taken on a life and significance of its own quite unrelated to the bill. Kamber said the "whole image" of organized labor has been put on trial. It would make no difference now if the bill contained nothing but a title and perhaps in a few weeks that may be all that's left of it. The business lobbies are determined to use this opportunity to knock the AFL-CIO on the head. If the bill fails to pass, the defeat will "weaken our ability to work with other political groups," Kamber said. "It will weaken us on the Hill and demoralize us." Membership in unions is declining, labor has lost on several important congressional votes recently and its leaders are beginning to feel desperate. "You can't get much further down than we are," Kamber said. The anti-labor strategy, he claimed, is to steer debate away from the substance of the legislation and play upon people's fears. According to the AFL-CIO line, the bill is a modest strengthening of the 1935 Wagner Act, its purpose being to make the National Labor Relations Board more efficient and to increase the severity of penalties imposed on flagrant violators of the 1935 act.

Harold Coxson, who is Kamber's opposite number at the Chamber of Commerce, on request came up with some criticisms of the bill that were said to reflect the substance of the opposition's argument. As far as the Chamber is concerned, the worst two parts of the bill are those known as the "equal access" and the "make-whole" provisions. The first would guarantee union activists equal footing with employers in promoting their cause during a unionization campaign. As the law stands now, employers may campaign against the union during working hours and on company property, but unions may not. If the employer insists on it, he can force the unions to campaign during off-hours, off the premises and without the use of an employee address list. The bill would give union organizers equal access to company property, company time and address lists. However, this new right would be granted only if the employer triggered it, by stopping work to speak to the employees about the union, by using company offices to hold anti-union meetings or by systematically campaigning against the union in person or through the mail. Equal access would be granted in measured steps, so that if the company sent out a campaign letter, the union would get the right to use the address list in order to send out a letter of its own. It would not get any of the other rights of access, unless the employer took advantage of them first. Yet when Harold Coxson described this clause, he mentioned that it would let union organizers roam up and down the production line, call a stop to work and campaign against the employer in his own shop. He conjured up an image of anarchy. This no doubt is how the Chamber scares the daylights out of its small-fry members. They can already see the union goons knocking on the door.

On the second point—the "make-whole" provision—the Chamber has a subtler argument. This section is designed to punish companies that refuse to negotiate with unions. Some companies are so inimical to unions (most notoriously the textile company J.P. Stevens) that they prefer to break the law and pay legal fees rather than do business with union leaders. The bill

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would increase the penalties for such lawbreakers as follows. If a company refused to negotiate with a newly elected union, and if the union won a judgment from the government saying that the company had illegally refused to bargain, then the company would be forced to pay dearly for its stubbornness. It would pay its employees an increase in wages and benefits large enough to bring those wages and benefits up to the level paid by the largest unionized companies in the US—that is, up to the average settlement won in the most recent quarter by bargaining units of 5000 or more employees. That's big business. A company hit with this penalty would have to pay an increase typically of 10 percent or more. It would continue paying until it signed a contract with the union.

According to Coxson, this measure would intimidate employers, especially the small variety, and cause them to sign contracts when by rights they ought to fight the union's demands. His case is built on a series of hypothetical assumptions. Without getting into the legal complexities, suffice it to say that no company that obeys the labor law should ever have to pay this penalty. Any company that finds itself confronted by a union that has won an election illegally can take the union to court and try to have it thrown out. If the union is thrown out by the court, there can be no penalty for refusal to bargain. One must assume that the courts do what is right and just. One cannot assume, as the Chamber of Commerce does, that unions will win elections illegally and then defeat justice in the courts. Laws must be written on the assumption that the legal system works.

The only shade of bias in this clause is that the penalty for non-bargaining is made into a bonus for the workers. There should be a penalty against companies that refuse to bargain, but it would be cleaner if it were enacted as a fine payable to the government and not to the employees.

These are a couple of the Chamber's best arguments against the bill. They don't amount to much. Coxson, speaking about the Chamber's strategy, said that the head counters have concluded that they cannot defeat the bill on a straight vote in the Senate. He added that it's too late for compromise. Even if the bill is amended in the Senate to accommodate businessmen's complaints, he fears that the accommodations would be written out again before final passage. Business doesn't want to take any risks at this point. Therefore the Chamber and its allies, big and small, have decided that the only way to stop the bad sections from passing is to advertise, lobby and filibuster the entire bill to death.

Senator Orrin Hatch and his allies have taken up the cause and are preparing to lay siege to the Senate for more than a month. When the preliminary filibuster is stopped by a vote of cloture, Hatch intends to introduce a string of time-killing amendments. He already has 300 on hand and hopes to have 500 soon. Majority Leader Robert Byrd says he will not take the bill off the floor until the Senate has voted it up or down.

The spectacle will hardly do the Senate any good. The Chamber of Commerce and Orrin Hatch plan to hold the government hostage and suffocate it into submission. They cannot get the votes, so they will do the next best thing and drown out the majority in a sea of business jargon, inflation studies, opinion polls, statements by worthy leaders, letters, visits and yelps. If the Senate gives in, it will be disgraced. But if it does not, it will have to endure a very long, dull and unproductive summer.

Eliot Marshall

White House Watch

R. Nixon, His Book

Only a bad book, a really godawful book could have come out of the process that brought into being *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (Grosset & Dunlap; $19.95). It wasn't written. It was produced—from 20,000 pages of handwritten notes accumulated by Nixon between 1946 and 1974; from reams of notes dictated to recorders and transcribed by secretaries during his vice presidency and presidency; from special transcriptions (he says) of all the conversations recorded on White House tapes in the first month after the Watergate burglary in 1972; and, finally, from hundreds of thousands of words dictated by Nixon in San Clemente after his resignation and from other thousands of words put together by researchers from interviews and other people's writings. Frank Gannon, who had been a writer on Nixon's White House staff and had helped Randolph Churchill write a biography of his father, Winston Churchill, prepared initial drafts from all this material. Nixon revised the Gannon drafts. Raymond K. Price Jr., who had been Nixon's chief White House writer and had written his own account of the Nixon presidency (*With Nixon*), cut the first Nixon-Gannon manuscript from around a million to about half a million words. Two Grosset & Dunlap editors had a go at Price's version. The publisher chose to print one volume instead of the two originally intended. Nixon insisted on covering his life from birth on January 9, 1913 ("in a house my father built," he says in a silly opening sentence), to resignation from the presidency on August 9, 1974. Nixon or somebody also insisted on clumping the events of each year together, without regard to their substantive relationship or lack of it. The result is a choppy book, marred especially in the pre-presidential portions with skimpy chunks and wordy wastes that add nothing to the known record. In

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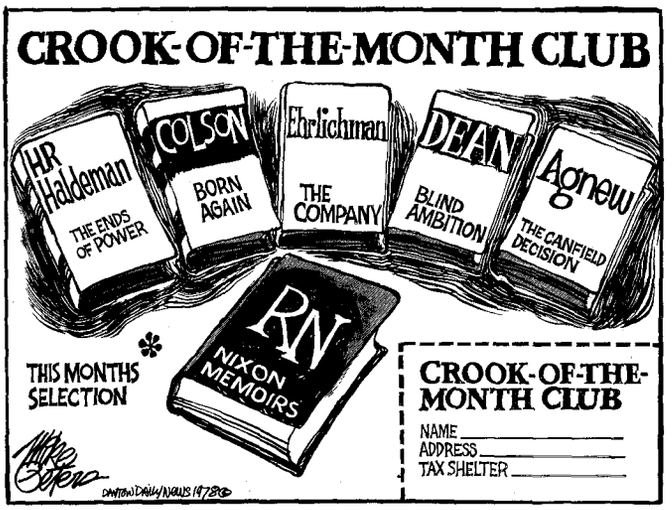
only two segments—the accounts of the first month after the Watergate break-in and of the final White House period when it was impossible to turn from Watergate for long—do we get a reasonably connected and coherent narrative.

And yet, even at the inflated hard-cover price, the book is worth buying. It rewards the effort required to get through its 1090 pages of text (plus 34 more pages of introduction and index, for which last Nixon and the publisher are herewith thanked). It probably won't alter any reader's prior opinion of Nixon, pro or con. It probably will do more to strengthen the cons than the pros. It is defensive, but who in right mind would expect anything else? Considering the attempts at concealment and distortion that brought Nixon down and all that he would surely have preferred to conceal or elide or distort in this aftermath account, there is less elision and concealment and distortion than might have been expected and was expected by many people. There is much less bitterness and recrimination in the Watergate passages than there was in Nixon's televised interviews with David Frost last year. For any reader patient and persistent enough to dig it out, there is a lot of interesting anecdote amid the dreary wastes.

Nixon says that he had Marjorie Acker, a long-time secretary, transcribe "the tapes of every conversation I had with H.R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson" between June 20 and July 20, 1972, the month following the Watergate break-in and arrests. Some of these tapes had been transcribed and released, some haven't been to this day. Nowhere in the account that Nixon derives from these transcriptions and from memory does he directly question Haldeman's published speculation—really charge—that Nixon had Colson set up the Watergate incursion in order to get dirt on Lawrence O'Brien, then chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Nixon indicates that he had a good deal less contact with Colson and was less worried about the break-in at the time than Colson remembers and published tape transcripts show. Otherwise, Nixon's matter-of-fact, seemingly straightforward account of that month is more damning to him than many of the raw transcripts with their many gaps and incoherencies were when they were published. Thus on June 22, in a reference to a former CIA agent who led the Watergate burglars and who had been brought into the White House by Colson: ". . . the FBI still had no case on Howard Hunt. We knew that he had been at the scene, but they did not. Haldeman said that the FBI had no warrant out for him and therefore did not care whether he had disappeared. The final good news was that the FBI could not trace the hundred-dollar bills that the break-in crew had been carrying the night they were arrested. This was good news because the money was another route by which the break-in could be tied to the CRP [Nixon's reelection committee]."

Nixon proceeds to an equally cool and damning summary of the three June 23 tapes that finished the destruction of his presidency when he disclosed them in August 1974 after the Supreme Court had said he must submit them and other tapes to a trial court. The transcribed conversations proved that Nixon had



Drawing by Mike Peters

authorized Haldeman to have the CIA persuade the FBI to curtail its Watergate investigation. One of the June 23 transcripts included cryptic and then unexplained references by Nixon to CIA Director Richard Helms and the CIA's disastrous invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. For example: ". . . we protected Helms from one hell of a lot of things. . . . You . . . just say this is a comedy of errors. . . . The President believes that it is going to open up the whole Bay of Pigs thing again." Nixon explains in the book that he figured that the involvement of Hunt, a former CIA operative, in the Watergate affair would give Helms reason to discourage further FBI investigation out of fear that it might if pursued implicate CIA in Watergate. But that wasn't all. Nixon continues in his book: "I thought back again to the time I had instructed Ehrlichman to ask Helms for the CIA's files on the Bay of Pigs, and the Diem assassination. I remembered how he had been unwilling to give them up. Even after I had personally requested that he do so, the Bay of Pigs report he turned over to us was not complete." After his conviction for obstructing justice, John Ehrlichman wrote in his novel, *The Company*, about a CIA director who was obviously modeled on Helms. The director in the story struggled desperately to conceal from his president a report on a CIA operation resembling the Bay of Pigs invasion. The report described the director's complicity in the murder of a CIA collaborator.

"I know," Nixon writes of his secretary, Rose Mary Woods, and of her connection with the erased portion of a subpoenaed White House tape, "that most people think that my inability to explain the 18½ minute gap is the most unbelievable and insulting part of the whole Watergate. Because of this, I am aware that my treatment of the gap will be looked upon as a touchstone for the candor and credibility of whatever

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else I write about Watergate. I also know that the only explanations that would readily be accepted are that I erased the tape myself or that Rose Mary Woods deliberately did so, either on her own initiative or at my direct or indirect request. But I know I did not do it. And I completely believe Rose when she says that she did not do it." Woods said that she accidentally erased about five of the 18½ missing minutes while transcribing the tape. Nixon complains that six experts retained by federal Judge John Sirica to determine the cause of the erasure "were experts in the theory of accoustics but not the practicalities of tape recorders." He said the finding that the erasure had to have been manually caused was therefore suspect. Nixon made much of the fact that the experts found and threw away without examining a defective part in the electronic system of the recorder on which the erasure occurred. All I know is that the recorder was working perfectly until Woods, according to her sworn testimony, accidentally erased a piece of the gap, and that some dedicated Nixon loyalists have concluded with the greatest reluctance that he did it.

Nixon tells near the end of his book how he realized in late July, 1974, that he would have to resign in order to spare the country the torment of his impeachment by the House and an impeachment trial in the Senate. Yet, after concluding that he must, he again and again succumbed to the hope that he might not have to resign. August 2 he "began the painful task of telling my family" that disclosure of the June 23 conversations would end any chance of forestalling impeachment and conviction. That night he sat alone for hours in the Lincoln Sitting Room and "decided that instead of resigning on Monday night I would release the June 23 tape and see the reaction to it. If it was as bad as I expected, then we would resume the countdown toward resignation." If not, he could still examine the "forlorn option" of holding on during a Senate trial. "In a subconscious way I knew that resignation was inevitable. But more than once over the next days I would yield to my desire to fight, and I would bridle as the inexorable end drew near." On the late afternoon of August 7, after Senators Hugh Scott and Barry Goldwater and Representative John Rhodes, the Republican leader in the House, told him that he was finished, he telephoned Rose Mary Woods "and asked her to tell the family that a final check of my dwindling support in Congress had confirmed that I had to resign." Throughout the book he had asserted and with many instances had demonstrated his love for his wife and two daughters and their love for him. At the end, though, he had his secretary tell them for him that it was all over and also ask them not to mention the subject at dinner that evening. After dinner with them he repaired alone to the Lincoln Sitting Room and asked Henry Kissinger to come over from the West Wing. After they had talked awhile and toasted each other with sips of brandy, "on an impulse I told him how every night, when I had finished work in the Lincoln Sitting Room, I would stop and kneel briefly and, following my mother's Quaker custom, pray silently for a few moments before going to bed. I asked him to pray with me now, and we knelt." Kissinger left and Nixon resumed work on the resignation speech he delivered the next night.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the *Washington Post* reporters who with their Watergate stories did more than anybody else except Richard Nixon to bring Nixon down, first told the story of his and Kissinger's farewell prayer in their *The Final Days*. Time and again in his book, Nixon expresses his profound distrust and hatred of the media and of journalists as a tribe. He never mentions Woodward and Bernstein. A Robert Woodward is mentioned once. He was ambassador to Uruguay when Vice President Nixon visited Latin America in 1958 and almost got killed by a mob in Venezuela.

John Osborne

Washington's only
biodegradable think tank.

The Gloom Brigade

One hundred and seventy-six years ago economist and clergyman Thomas Malthus made his reputation with the dour observation that population, unchecked, increases geometrically, while production of necessities for subsistence increases only arithmetically. In 1974 Lester Brown was one of the economists and politicians at the Rome Food Conference, which declared that population was increasing geometrically while subsistence was increasing only arithmetically. About the same time the OPEC price hike reinforced the notion that the earth has limited resources to support inhabitants. Malthus never really took his observation and ran with it. But according to Shakespeare, "sweet are the uses of adversity"—and Lester Brown, then 40, late of a tomato farm in New Jersey, late of the Agriculture Department and soon to be late of the Overseas Development Council, saw his use.

For many years, well before it was fashionable, Brown had been spreading gloom about the limits of our natural resources, first while administrator of the International Agricultural Development Service of the Agriculture Department and then as a senior fellow at ODC, a Washington think tank. In 1965 the Junior Chamber of Commerce chose Brown as one of the "Ten Outstanding Young Men of America" for his role in getting US grain to India, preventing a famine

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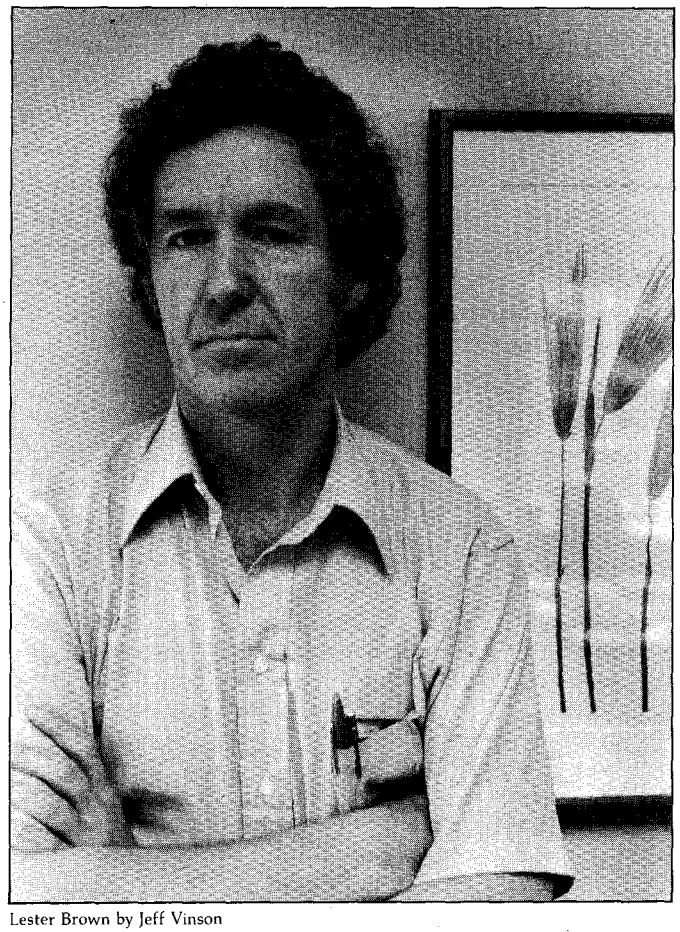
threatened by a massive Indian crop failure. (Others honored that year include Joseph Califano, then special assistant to LBJ, and Ralph Nader, then Ralph Nader.) By 1974 the crisis of scarcity was no longer just a



Lester Brown by Jeff Vinson

problem for the third world. Brown had an idea for a way to help cope with what he calls this "period of rapid change." His idea was to create another Washington think tank.

In 1974 Worldwatch Institute came into the world to provide what Lester Brown calls a "global early warning system." Just as the supply of natural resources seems to be shrinking so too do the requirements for what constitutes a think tank. Worldwatch does not, nor claim to, do original research or offer solutions. What it does do is to provide a "synthesis" of current literature on a given global problem, and to provide it in a palatable form for the press—with which Worldwatch rightly claims a "symbiotic" relationship. In the past three and a half years, Worldwatch has produced 18 papers and four books on the subjects of energy, food, population, health and women.

Working with William Dietel, now president of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Brown received $500,000 from that fund to establish Worldwatch. This is peanuts compared to the budgets of the granddaddy tanks such as Brookings ($7 million) and the American Enterprise Institute ($5.5 million). The original idea of setting up another mammoth think tank was rejected as an unseemly way to celebrate diminishing global resources. Worldwatch also has received $50,000 a year since its founding from Robert O. Anderson, who is chairman of the board of Atlantic Richfield Corporation, founder of the Aspen Institute and a Worldwatch board member. Brown approached Anderson, who spends much of his personal fortune financing institutions of this sort, after Worldwatch was in the blueprint stage. Brown says he heard through the foundation grant grapevine that Anderson had been looking for a small institution with "social value" he could give his money to.

The spacious offices of Worldwatch in a Washington office building are decorated with prints researchers have picked up in Latin America and India. The view from Lester Brown's office window is of the Brookings Institution. Unlike those at such old-fashioned places as Brookings, who like to mix it up with politicians—either to get their policies to become the administration's policies, or to become the administration themselves—those at Worldwatch are looking for recognition from a different quarter.

"We pay more attention to how our material gets disseminated than most think tanks," says Brown, slowly. Brown says everything slowly. It seems to be the Worldwatch style. All the researchers seem to punctuate their carefully thought-out sentences with long contemplation of the window or the ceiling. To prove his point about dissemination, Brown pulls out meticulous records of news organizations where Worldwatch papers have been sent, along with an impressive list of where stories on Worldwatch have run throughout the world. In addition, two of the eight Worldwatch researchers spend nearly all their time working on a topic Worldwatch calls "outreach." "Outreach," says Outreach director Bruce Stokes, "is really p.r."

Brown emphasizes that Worldwatch is "much more self-contained" than its institutional neighbors along Massachusetts Avenue. Since there haven't been enough world crises to keep up with Worldwatch's bi-monthly publication schedule, this principle of self-sufficiency is reflected in the Worldwatch product. Many of the papers are cannibalized from previous Worldwatch publications, seasoned with references to newspaper and magazine stories. One former researcher says Brown's success at getting reporters to cover the institute's rehash of current literature is due to his facility at packaging. "He serves shrimp salad and alfalfa sprouts with pre-digested papers, ready to print. All this is accompanied by Lester's low-key great man style."

Although Brown's is the final word on everything from paper topics and salaries to office decor and luncheon menus, each 25-page paper contains the usual disclaimer: "The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of

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Worldwatch Institute. . . ." The lack of a strong editorial voice, coupled with the pressure to give the press its regular dose of apocalypse, have resulted in a very uneven product, dependent upon the skill of each researcher. However, the first paper published under the Worldwatch aegis, "The Other Energy Crisis: Firewood," written by Erik Eckholm, did a lot quickly to establish Worldwatch as worthy of media attention. Eckholm, 28, is often singled out for praise, and his book on the use and abuse of natural resources, *Losing Ground*, is well respected in the field. With his curly brown hair, blue eyes and slight, athletic build, he looks disconcertingly like Brown himself. What Eckholm documented in 1975 was the neglected fact that firewood, the fuel used for cooking and heating by one-third of the world's population, is becoming a devastatingly scarce commodity. His report got coverage in over 100 newspapers, and received the ultimate in journalistic legitimacy—a front-page story in *The New York Times*.

If there is a Worldwatch *raison d'être* it seems to be getting attention in the newspapers. The Worldwatch world view is a little less explicit. If one is of a melancholic nature, reading the Worldwatch publications could be a harrowing experience. The most oft-repeated theme is that people with power are intent on squandering human and natural resources. But for an organization dealing with problems that require political solutions, Worldwatch is remarkably oblivious to politics. The assumption that comes through in their papers is that if good ordinary folks would only grow radishes in their window boxes, or better, live like the Chinese—an especially popular theme in Worldwatch papers—things would be all right.

The next book from Worldwatch, to be called "The Sisterhood of Man," will be about the status of women around the world. If that sounds vague, the book's two authors are unable to explain it more precisely. Feminism, however, is in rather a dormant period as far as media interest is concerned, so the big excitement around Worldwatch these days is over that hot topic, solar energy. Researcher Denis Hayes, author of a book called *Rays of Hope*, was instrumental in organizing the recent Sun Day demonstrations.

As Worldwatch has settled into the think tank scene, the Rockefeller money has diminished, to $175,000 this year. A large part of Worldwatch's half-million-dollar budget is now met by the United Nations. Worldwatch is due to receive $110,000 from the UN Environment Fund and $80,000 from the UN Fund for Population Activities. The sale of Worldwatch papers (which have been translated into about 12 languages) has made the institute 30-percent self-supporting—a type of self-sufficiency most think tanks never contemplate. Salaries range from the high teens through mid-30s, but Brown declines to release exact figures.

While Brown has been called "one of the world's most influential thinkers" by that arbiter of influence, *The Washington Post*, he hesitates to indulge in speculation about what our resourceless future will look like. He does point out that the Worldwatch staff is a remarkably cheery crew. And why not? As long as the current order continues, Worldwatch's own future looks secure. The crises Worldwatch was established to explain appear to be as endless as the trail of foundation grants.

Emily Yoffe

Emily Yoffe is a Washington writer and former *TNR* summer intern. This is another in an occasional series of articles on non-government institutions in Washington and their effect on policymaking.

From sliding windows
to floating thresholds.

Restacking the Deck

For those who believe, as I do, that the opening skirmish of the 1980 Democratic nominating contest is being fought right now in the form of a dispute over which rules will apply, here is an update to confirm their suspicions. The White House has put a brand new pea under the shell in the rulemaking game.

When the Winograd Commission, the party's newest reform group, finished its work a few months ago, the majority recommendations were the product of a coalition directed by President Carter's White House aides and political advisers. The recommendations were crafted with 1980 in mind. Together, the proposals seemed designed to harry Carter's potential Democratic challengers and to provide a cushion for the incumbent. The centerpiece of the scheme was dubbed the "sliding window scale." It concerned the minimum support a candidate must get in each delegate-selection district in order to get a proportional share of the delegates available in that district. In 1976, that threshold was 15 percent. The Winograd Commission proposed to retain the 15 percent threshold for early primaries, but to raise that threshold to 20 percent, then 25 percent for later contests. This idea was sold as a "consensus building" mechanism. With the same 15 percent nationwide threshold that operated in 1976, it was said, no one could be sure that the party would arrive at a consensus choice through the primaries. To a substantial number on the Winograd Commission who filed a series of minority reports with the Democratic National Committee, and to an even larger number in the party, the whole scheme smacked of stacking the 1980 deck in Carter's favor.

There was sufficient uproar that when the DNC executive committee met last week to receive the

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Winograd report, the White House abandoned some of its original recommendations and showed up with new ideas billed as a compromise. The biggest change called for the sliding window to be scrapped. It is to be replaced, it seems, by a scheme unveiled by South Carolina state chairman Don Fowler, a fallen-away fan of the sliding window. It has been hailed for its alleged simplicity by the DNC's new chairman, John White. In states that choose their candidates by caucus rather than by primary, the state party could choose its own threshold within the range of 15 and 20 percent. For states that choose their delegates by primaries, there would be a floating threshold depending on the number of delegates to be elected from each district. The number of delegates allotted to each state depends on the vote returns from past presidential elections. Each state party is free to determine whether delegates are selected by congressional district or in smaller units. Under Fowler's proposal the threshold will be determined in each district by dividing the number of delegates to be elected into 100. So, for example, if a district elects four delegates, the cutoff is 25 percent; five delegates, the cutoff is 20 percent; and so forth. Most states select delegates by congressional districts, with three to nine delegates chosen in each district. But New Jersey, Texas and Pennsylvania, among other states, use state senate and state assembly districts, with fewer delegates elected in each. In these places, the threshold to qualify for delegate will be as high as 33 percent or even 50 percent.

On the basis of a brief oral explanation and without ever seeing the new White House proposition written out on paper, the executive committee voted to recommend this rule to the full DNC when it meets in June.

Word has passed inside party circles that before the White House scheme was presented to the executive committee it was run quietly through the computers of the president's personal pollster, Patrick Caddell, to confirm that it contained the necessary ingredient, the vaunted consensus-building mechanism. It does.

Every apportionment scheme or election system works to the benefit of somebody and the detriment of somebody else. Usually you need only check the spin on the ball to find out who's being helped and who's being had. For example, the idea behind the uniform 15 percent rule that operated in 1976 was that any candidate who reached that threshold of popular support was entitled to a proportionate share of delegates. As things worked out, once in a while there simply weren't enough delegates in every district for each 15 percenter to get a share, but the tip in the system was slightly in favor of assuring a fair share for minor candidates. Even so, it didn't take all that long in 1976 for a consensus to begin to build and for candidates like Bayh, Shriver, Harris, Wallace, Jackson, Bentsen and Shapp to fall by the wayside.

Clear away the mumbo jumbo about consensus building and what you have in the new White House floating threshold scheme is the same thing as the discarded sliding window: a system that tips to the advantage of the frontrunners. This is what the system's authors assume the president will be in 1980. If past experience is any guide, only about three districts in 10 will elect six or more delegates in 1980, meaning that the threshold in 70 percent of the districts will be well above the 15 percent level of 1976.

The next question in a system like this one proposed by the White House is what happens once the threshold has been computed, the stragglers eliminated and the initial round of delegates allocated. Work it out with a hand calculator and you will discover that the consistent mechanical effect is a tilt in favor of the leader. As a corollary, of course, the system tips against the rest of the field and weeds out the fringe candidates. Perhaps this is just another way of saying that it promotes a consensus.

Where similar systems are used in parliamentary elections, the recognized and desired effect is to reward the larger parties, on the theory that this reduces fragmentation and promotes more stable governments. By applying it to the primaries in this country, what its sponsors hope to do is to get President Carter on the lopside right away and encourage a quick conclusion to any Democratic primary challenge in 1980.

The oddest thing about the new proposal is that it came wrapped in the blessings of Democratic Party chairman John White, who has nothing in his record heretofore to indicate an appetite for such mischief. It's useful that the chairman sees virtue in the simplicity of the floating threshold idea, because if the DNC buys the White House package, it will fall to John White to promote and enforce it for 1980.

What the national chairman will be able to tell party leaders around the country is that with the sliding window gone it will no longer be necessary for states to apply different thresholds depending on when they hold their primaries. Of course each state chairman will be faced with applying two, three, four or even five different thresholds within his own state, depending on the number of delegates to be chosen from a particular district. When this system is applied in 1980 to the 14 congressional districts of Chicago and its suburbs, for example, there will be five different thresholds of support a candidate must receive in order to qualify for delegates, ranging from 11 percent to 20 percent.

Then the national chairman will explain why this is a fair system to the various presidential contenders of his party. To these fellows it means a lot. They must decipher the floating threshold system and take account of its effects months before the primaries as they draw up their plans about which primaries to enter, where to file delegates and where to commit organizational resources state-by-state, district-by-

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district. Surely they will be charmed by its simplicity.

Finally, the national chairman will have to set himself the task of explaining all the variations in the system to rank-and-file Democrats. To these people, who are interested in casting a simple, direct and equal vote for their party's nominee, what John White will have to explain is just why this floating threshold business was necessary anyway, and why a uniform 15 percent cutoff simply wouldn't do.

By the way, some of those reportedly involved in looking over the Caddell computer runs profess amazement that anyone would be rude enough to suggest that such preliminary calculations ever took place. I can't understand why they bother with the protestations of innocence. If you are going to take the political heat for stacking the deck, you may as well be sure the cards are going to come out right, even if it takes a computer to figure that out.

Ken Bode

"Leaving U.S., Entering Yoruba Kingdom."

A King in South Carolina

by Joshua Goldstein

King Oba Oserjeman, also known as Babalosha Adefuni and no longer known as Walter King, lives with his six wives, 13 children and about 100 followers in his kingdom, which is located in Beaufort County, South Carolina. The king shares Beaufort County with Hilton Head Island, the fashionable resort, and Parris Island, the huge Marine base, plus some small farms and mobile homes. But the Yoruba African tribal village is at peace with its neighbors.

The turn-off to Oyotunji Village on the highway from Savannah is marked by a decorative sign: two highly stylized one-dimensional figures in white robes and headdresses play the pipes and drums while a third looks on. In red and white lettering are the words: Welcome Oyotunji African Village. About half a mile down the wooded dirt road there is a clearing, announced by an empty sentry box and an archway with a decapitated chicken hanging from it. The clearing contains jerrybuilt stalls and dwellings made out of two-by-fours, plywood boardings for the walls and corrugated metal or palm frond roofs. Interspersed among these structures are temples to the major Orishas—the Yoruba gods. The shrines consist of several poles supporting a small roof. Underneath each roof is either a sculptural representation of a god, or a shrine bowl.

Small pens for sheep and a cluster of chicken coops sit 20 feet off the road. A rusted-out barrel, used as a drum to call the people together, sits at the crossroads in the center of the village. To the right, the intersecting road almost immediately dead-ends into the palace of the king—the Afin. To the left it continues for about a hundred yards to a drainage ditch that marks the end of the village. Past the intersection are some more shrines, a well house, visitors' parking and two outhouses. Then the forest takes over again. There are eleven acres in all.

There are nine or 10 compounds on the main residential street. A compound consists of a number of connecting buildings almost completely walling in an inner courtyard. The compounds are modeled, I am told, on the communal Yoruba dwellings of West Africa. The outer walls are red, a favorite color of the Yorubas. A highly stylized motif of a serpent eating its tail adorns some of the walls. Sculptures of a person or some mythical entity are built into the supporting columns of the cloistered walkway bordering the inner courtyard. Such adornments are most plentiful in the king's palace.

The household that lives in a compound typically includes a man, his wife or wives, their children and single men or women who have not yet established their own households. Husband and wife occupy separate quarters. Some of these apartments are well furnished, with amenities such as rugs, bookcases, wall hangings and, oddly enough, linoleum floors. All of them have wood stoves and Coleman lanterns.

"Dress makes sculpture of men and women in Yorubaland," Robert Farris Thompson wrote in his book, *Black Gods and Kings*, about the nine or 10 million Yorubas living in Dahomey, Nigeria and Togo. Certainly in their dress the Oyotunji villagers authentically reproduce African life. The bright colors of their

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loose-fitting robes often identify the gods they serve. The women wear elaborate turbans.

Today, after a period of heavy turnover, there is a stable core of roughly 100 people in Oyotunji Village, including about 50 children. The community supports itself by divinations conducted for outsiders by the village priests, by tourism, and with food stamps. The priests also make money by prescribing cures, and selling sculptures of gods. According to *Ebony* magazine, the prices of gods range from $120 to $200; sacrifices are done for from $25 to more than $100; love potions sell at $25 a quart. Only one person works outside the village. Children attend the Royal Yoruba Academy, which is chartered by the state of South Carolina.

In their spare time, villagers make jewelry or other handicraft objects. Some of their work is sold to the tourists who visit the stalls set up close to the entrance of the village. The chief of protocol escorts guests (who have paid a small admission fee) around the village, explaining the sights. She is careful to protect the privacy of busy villagers; a visitor is never allowed to wander freely. At night, people make music, read or attend meetings of the men's or women's group. They retire early. Sentries patrol the village all night.

Oba Oserjeman is the charismatic leader who founded Oyotunji. He is the village's first principle and its driving force. The village is his dream and owes its continued existence to his magnetism. Having an audience with the king is a signal occasion. I waited under the archway that opens onto the main courtyard of the palace, while a member of the palace guard announced me. A half hour passed. The guard came back. He ordered me to move up and stop under the next archway—the entrance to the king's inner sanctum. Another half hour passed. Procrastination is a royal prerogative, as well as a clever tactic to increase my respect of the office.

The man who finally emerged through the swinging saloon-style doors was a tall, lanky gentleman in flowing robes, wearing a strange, lopsided court jester's hat (actually it is a distinguished Yoruba headdress). The king is very engaging and warm—almost boyish. He has a bearded narrow face and bright eyes. I had expected something of a martinet, a Patton figure, an enforcer. But this is a man of poise and manners; it is the charm of his personality that keeps his subjects loyal.

King Oba Oserjeman, né Walter King, was born in Detroit under the sign of libra (astrology, he says, underlies all religions). His mother and father were both disciples of Marcus Garvey. His father started a "Society of Moorish Americans" in Detroit—a forerunner, Oserjeman says, of Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslims. The king dates his interest in African culture to his early teens. At this time, he sent away for books on African life; he also ordered African masks. But his interest was ephemeral; it did not become compelling until many years later. After graduation from a technical high school, he worked for his father's upholstery and trucking firm, King and Son. At 20, he left Detroit to become a dancer. For a while, he danced in Chicago; then he joined the Catherine Dunham company in California. At 23, he married a white girl of Danish ancestry.

On a vacation trip, Walter King saw the King Tut Exhibition in Cairo. He realized for the first time, he says, that the African race was capable of great culture. (In his scheme of things, Egyptians are an African people.) Elated by this discovery, he immersed himself in African history. His cultural activities grew up around a coffee shop he started in Greenwich Village, called Port Afrique.

The independence of Ghana in 1956 stirred Walter King deeply. In 1959 he went to Cuba, where he was initiated into the priesthood of Obatala (the Yoruba God of Wisdom) by the Lucumi people—Cubans who are descendants of African Yorubas. A Lucumi priest told him that he was destined to become a king. With his friend Chris Oliana, who had been initiated in Cuba at the same time, he established the Shango Temple on 125th Street. He soon parted ways with Oliana, who was content with the Cuban tradition: a synthesis of Catholicism and Yoruba beliefs. Oserjeman wanted to resurrect the pure African culture. With this end in mind, he founded the Yoruba Temple in Harlem in 1960. Between 1960 and 1969, chapters of his Temple opened in Boston, Philadelphia and Gary, Indiana. He and his wife were divorced in the mid-1960s; the intensity of his cultural commitments made an interracial marriage very awkward.

With his second wife and their three children, Oserjeman moved south in 1969. A true cultural restoration was impossible, he felt, in New York. There, Yoruba culture could only be an avocation, not the central focus of life. There was no way he could enforce royal mandates in weekly gatherings. And he was tired of making runs to New Jersey for sacrificial chickens; fowl would be much easier to obtain in the country. For six months he floundered in Savannah. His wife would not let him work because he was a king. He finally settled in a farmhouse on Brays Island Road in Beaufort County, South Carolina. In 1971, Chief Elemonsa, a long time stalwart, came south with his family. Other people began to trickle down. In 1972, Oserjeman went to Nigeria where he was initiated into the priesthood of Ifa—the highest and most accurate oracle. That same year, he moved to the present 12-acre site, buying the land for about $500 from a farmer named Small.

Most of the villagers were raised in the urban North—the products of middle class backgrounds. For many of them, the decision to join the village has caused a rift with their parents. After going through a trial period of several months to see if they can adjust to the rigors of village life, they either become full fledged

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members or are asked to leave. In joining this feudal society, they abdicate their freedom and the comforts of civilized life. Besides the king's charisma, then, what is the attraction?

Iya Orite, the king's third wife, was a teacher in the New York public school system and a dancer before coming to the village. She decided that things were hopeless for black people in America. Blacks, she says, are fundamentally different from whites and are incapable of competing with them. She also recalls nostalgically that her grandmother used to tell her that "everything is a sign of something," and would predict the future. For this reason, she says, it was natural for her to feel at home in Yoruba culture in which almost every daily manifestation is perceived to be the expression of a higher force.

Chief Elemonsa is 39 and (after the king) the second oldest member of the village. He joined forces with Oserjeman early in the New York period. Like Iya Orite, he believes that blacks were better off when "they stayed in their quarters, and the whites stayed in theirs." It does not matter that blacks were poorer in Jim Crow days: "They need less money than whites." He does not mind living in a feudal society. "The truest definition of freedom is knowing your limitations," he says, and anyway, American society "says you're free, but you can't go anywhere without money."

Iyawo Okan studied urban education and political science at Brown University. Traveling to Oyotunji to study the king, she ended up marrying him. Blacks, she says, are a piscean race. This means that they can not compete with the technological white Americans (a people of Aries) because the strong suit of a piscean people is spirituality. Frequently, her talk is sprinkled with Marxist catchphrases—a throwback to her student days. While at Brown, she did not associate with many whites.

In most of the people I talked to, the atavistic impulse to return to the South seemed less forced than the atavistic impulse to return to African culture. The South seems to be a stirring alternative to the decaying northern city. And in light of their separatist philosophy, the *de facto* survival of Jim Crow in parts of the South makes it more to their liking than the northern melting pot.

"Every aspect of life is taken care of by Yoruba: each person who comes to earth has a specific destiny," a villager says. Clearly, villagers will give up a certain amount of freedom for the feeling of having a specific place in the scheme of things. There is comfort and security in a highly ritualized life. The people of Oyotunji speak in one voice: there is a consensus on the important matters of life.

The show of respect, called "dobale," is a constant reminder of the rigid hierarchy at Oyotunji. Every inferior must show respect to his superior when he walks by. A subject must prostrate himself before the king. Bowing deeply, grabbing some dirt and spinning half way around is a common courtesy shown a superior. There seem to be infinite variations on this protocol. From what I observed, the villagers are deadly serious about dobale. It is an amusing sight when someone forgets and then goes through his show of respect after his superior is well out of sight. Strict obedience to the many rituals at Oyotunji keeps the villagers very busy.

The villagers worship 401 gods. They have a god to represent just about everything. There are eight major Orishas (pagan gods) to whom the people pay special heed. The king compares them to the Greek gods. This is a good analogy: each god has a highly differentiated function, and none is an unspotted moral paragon. Representative pagan gods are Obatala, the god of thought and wisdom (the highest of the pagan gods); Osun, goddess of love and beauty; Shango, god of money and power; and Ogun, god of iron and technology. These pagan gods are tributaries of the higher force known as Olorun, the all-encompassing universal energy for whom there is no temple.

Iyawo Okan, the assistant head of protocol, explained how and why the people make ebos (sacrifices) to the pagan gods. When someone is troubled, a priest does a reading to see which god is offended and how to propitiate him. Sometimes one's course of action is obvious: if a car breaks down one makes a sacrifice to Ogun, god of technology. In front of the shrine of Elegba (god of sex and journalism) was a jar filled with some liquid, a shoe and a sea of feathers. Tied to a cross piece on top of the shrine was a chicken giving a few final shivers before rigor mortis set in. "That is cruel," I said to Iyawo Okan. "There is a gross part in every religion," she replied. (Referring to all the animal sacrifices, a villager commented, "You've got to be a butcher to be a priest.")

Below the gods is the king, who is considered to be a demi-god. Under him are the chiefs of the different compounds (who, as priests, serve one of the eight major Orishas). The chiefs run their compounds; as one of their duties they handle infractions against village law. An injured party may take his appeal all the way to the highest seat of justice, the king.

I asked the king if, as a Western man, he was not skeptical at times about being treated like a demi-god whose readings were considered infallible. He replied, with droll pleasure, that in his New York days he was, indeed, uncomfortable, even impatient with his followers who insisted on worshipping him. But because they needed him, he "took on airs." Gradually, he came to believe in the power of his divination when clients returned to testify to its accuracy.

Polygamy is an integral part of Yoruba culture. But there is an equal number of men and women in the village. With six of the women wed to the king (who has the most wives) and another three to Chief Elemonsa, this leaves roughly 14 women to pair off with 23 men.

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Finding even one wife may be difficult. Polygamy is not the same as promiscuity. Premarital sex is forbidden; even flirting is not permissible. Marriage must be approved by the king, who does a divination to determine whether the union will be successful. Once married, husband and wife keep separate quarters in the compound.

Children begin school at the age of eight. Since most of the children are between the ages of one and seven, there is, at the moment at least, no problem of overcrowding in the classroom. They attend the Royal Yoruba Academy, located in one of the compounds, where they follow a dual curriculum of American and Yoruba subjects. While school was not in session when I visited the village, I learned that the boys and girls attend separate classes. The goal of education is to develop the ideal Yoruba man or woman. Language instruction has been a real problem. Few of the children (or the adults for that matter) have a real command of spoken Yoruba. Snatches of the language pop up in conversation: "Get the iggi" (firewood), "Alafia" (hello), "Bene" (good) are words one hears frequently.

A road sign in the middle of the village says, "One kilometer from the U.S.A." But of course the very existence of Oyotunji depends upon the toleration of the state of South Carolina: 20 families receive food stamps; the children's school is chartered by the state; at one time a sanitation inspector almost closed the village down. The village's ties with its neighbors in Sheldon Township are friendly but not close. The village newspaper, a one or two page publication called "The African Pioneer," prints information about their Sheldon neighbors, such as farming tips, wedding announcements and the success of a son in college. Elsewhere in the paper a coming Yoruba festival is announced. In a boxed-off corner at the bottom of the page is a list of Yoruba vowels and how to pronounce them. This is a pleasant newssheet, avoiding (at least in issues I saw) heavy-handed indoctrination. Oserjeman, nevertheless, has a grandiose plan to educate "the peasants" of Sheldon Township. Ideally, he would like to swap spiritual guidance for produce.

Lieutenant R. C. Jenkins of the Beaufort County sheriff's office tells me that his office has had no more trouble with the villagers than with any other citizens. Several years ago, a homicide took place at the Bray's Island site. According to Jenkins's police report, Abigame Erindele shot to death Leroy Robert Turner, a former villager, who had moments before run over King Oserjeman in his automobile. (The king was hospitalized for several days.) Judge Kline, the magistrate in Dale, South Carolina, dismissed the charges against Erindele at the preliminary hearing. On another occasion, the FBI discovered that fugitives were hiding in the village. Oserjeman argues that it was his duty as sovereign of a foreign nation to grant them asylum.

The local citizens are mostly bemused by the village. "This is the year 2000, and they're living prehistoric," a gas station attendant said. A white man twitted his black co-worker in the city of Beaufort: "If we went in there they'd take us to the stake and by the time the water had boiled you would have joined up." Some people fear the village, seeing it as something like the local bogeyman: "You can't go in after dark, they won't let you out," one woman said. Some blacks are proud of the village, but add quickly that they would never want to live there. In one way or another the village has entered local imagination and will survive in local lore.

Middle-class black vacationers, interested in their roots, stop at Oyotunji. They are bemused at the squalor in which the people have chosen to live—a squalor which, only a generation ago, few blacks could escape. One day I listened to Iyawo Okan explain to a middle-aged prosperous-looking black man that blacks are more spiritual than whites and closer to nature. The black man grimaced and said with some pique, "In other words what you be sayin' is that we're closer to the animals."

As a separatist, the king, in fact, often sounds like a hard-core white segregationist. Despising all civil rights organizations, he is particularly vitriolic about the NAACP. King Oserjeman has a highly idiosyncratic interpretation of the NAACP's origins. He claims that the white liberals who helped to found it were mainly "zionists" who supported integration to protect and expand Jewish business in the black ghetto. Jim Crow laws, he says, deprived Jewish merchants of a market in the ghetto and had the effect of strengthening black business.

Oserjeman believes that the Yoruba religion should be brought to America—which, he explains, is just the opposite of Marcus Garvey's program of sending blacks in this hemisphere back to Africa to live by the Christian faith. But the king does not blame centuries of exploitation for what he sees as the failure of the black man in America. To be certain, it taxed the black spirit, but it was the profound differences between the races that made this failure inevitable. Blacks had their origins in the authoritarian Yoruba society of West Africa; for this reason they can't succeed in a Western democracy. The civil rights movement, then, Oserjeman says, is pure folly—trying to "make an equality out of apples and plums." Naturally there has been no progress.

Professor Thompson, author of *Black Gods and Kings*, a white man, says that Oyotunji village "is as culturally important as Paris at the turn of the century." Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), on the other hand, calls it a museum and an anachronism—the resurrection of a feudal society from which Africans themselves are trying to escape. King Oserjeman says the merit of the Yoruba experiment in South Carolina will be demonstrated by the achievement which his civilization will be sure to make in the future.

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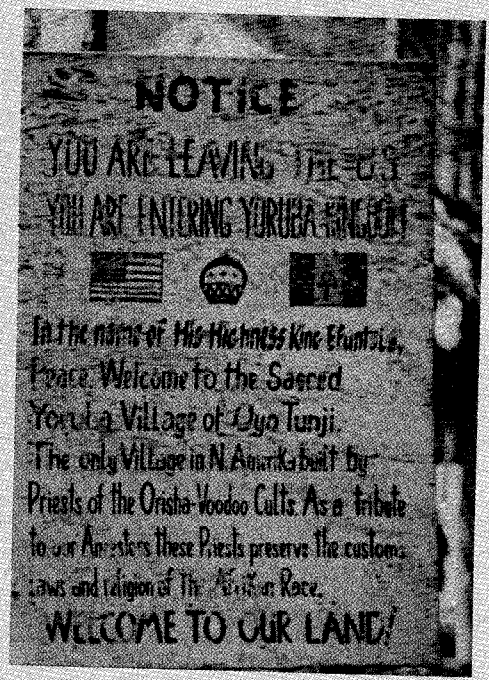
NOTICE
YOU ARE LEAVING THE U.S.
YOU ARE ENTERING YORUBA TANGIER
In the name of His Highness King Efuntola,
Peace. Welcome to the Sacred
Yoruba Village of Oyo Tunji.
The only Village in N. America built by
Priests of the Orisha-Voodoo Cults As a tribute
to our Ancestors these Priests preserve the customs
Laws and religion of the African Race.
WELCOME TO OUR LAND!

Photographs by
Jeff Vinson

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"Just because I work for an oil company doesn't mean I like dirty beaches."

"Some of my friends actually seem to think that anybody who works for an oil company likes dead birds and dirty beaches," says Gulf Drilling Superintendent Bob Eslinger.

"Of course, I don't, any more than you do. But I like having a car and a warm house for my family. And those things take energy.

"I honestly think you can have both energy and a good environment, if you try to do things right. And a lot of things are being done right.

Three out of 20,000

"For instance, since the early 1940's, the oil industry drilled 20,000 oil and gas wells in the Gulf of Mexico—and has had only three major oil spills in all that time. That's a pretty good record. And in each case, after a year's time, you'd never know there had been an oil spill.

We're finding ways

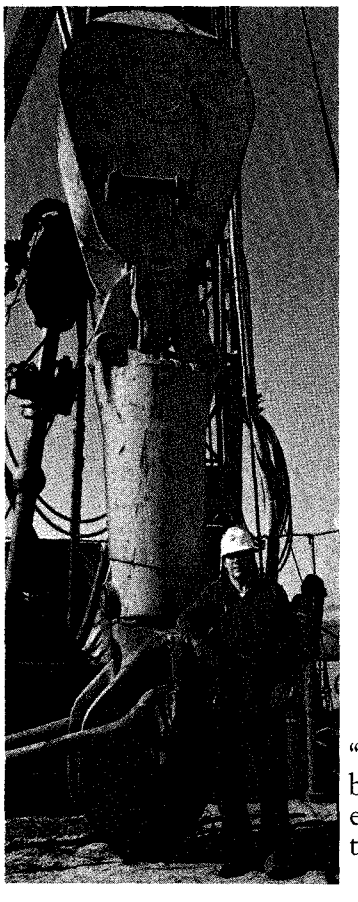
"I'm proud of my company—Gulf Oil—because I know firsthand a lot of the things Gulf does, and the precautions we take, to get the energy and preserve the environment. Like relandscaping old surface mines. And helping industry find ways to eliminate pollution.

"Probably you can't expect oil companies and environmentalists ever to agree completely. But you don't need complete agreement to make something work.

"Gulf and the other oil companies are making a lot of things work to get the energy we need and protect the environment. It's a tremendous challenge, and I think we're handling it pretty well."

Gulf

Gulf people: meeting the challenge.



"I think you can have both energy and a good environment, if you try to do things right."

"That's me, my wife Britt, and my son Erick at Matagorda Beach. We come here as often as we can."

Gulf Oil Corporation

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on theater

Sweets from Abroad

Da (Morosco). Odd about the Irish. In the first decades of this century, Irish writers, headed by Yeats and Lady Gregory, were a chief force in the theater. The impulse behind the self-styled Irish Dramatic Movement was curious (and may be uncomfortable to remember). Until that time the Irish theater generally thought of itself as part of and dependent on the English theater. Yeats, first and in particular, thought that this theater was suffering from the pallor of Ibsenite realism and that the Irish could infuse it with poetic vigor. Says Una Ellis-Fermor in her book on the subject: "It was thus left to the Irish Dramatic Movement to bring back to the English theater the poetry it had missed in [middle-period] Ibsen, presenting it, if not in terms of English society, at least in a language which Englishmen could understand . . ."

Of course it was already a standing joke that many of the leading "English" dramatists were Irish: Sheridan, Goldsmith, Farquhar, Shaw, Wilde. But here was a programmatic effort, doubtless spurred by growing Irish nationalism, and its results were epochal, especially in the works of the founders and of Synge, who was evangelized by Yeats to leave his esthete's life in Paris and go home to write of his native land.

Even after its highest days, which included the Dublin-slum dramas of Sean O'Casey, the Irish movement continued to bless the theater with plays of worth: some of the later O'Casey, Lennox Robinson, Denis Johnston, Paul Vincent Carroll, several others. (Charles Chaplin was so impressed with Carroll's *Shadow and Substance* that he bought the screen rights and wrote a screenplay. He abandoned production only because Oona O'Neill, who was to play the saintly girl, decided after their marriage that she didn't want a career.) It was a rare Broadway season between the wars that didn't bring us at least one new Irish play, even if it was only such a trifle as *Old Man Murphy* (1931), which I saw twice in one week when I was 15 because it starred Maire O'Neill who had been Synge's beloved before his early death.

And if there was or was not a new Irish play, there might be a visit by the wondrous Abbey Theater, which then included such actors as Barry Fitzgerald, Sara Allgood (Maire O'Neill's sister), and a forgotten fine artist named Eileen Crowe. And in 1948 came the excellent Gate Theater of Dublin, with its two founders Hilton Edwards and the (lately deceased) Micheál MacLiammóir in plays of Shaw and Johnston.

But what's happened? Obviously no New Yorker, reliant on imports, can pass on the state of Irish playwriting or production, but on the basis of what *is* imported and of what one reads in journals, it's hard to avoid concluding that the arc of Irish theatrical inspiration has badly declined. Theater writing of consequence in every country seems to go in waves, admittedly, but the falling-off in Ireland seems especially drastic.

The best new Irish play I've seen in recent years was Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* (1966), and that one I thought "amiable and appealing enough but unexciting." I missed some subsequent Friel productions, but nothing I read about them made me regret it. The Irish writer who has probably been produced most in the US of late is Hugh Leonard: a pointless dramatization of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* (1966), *The Poker Session* (1967), which I didn't see, *The Au Pair Man* (1973), which unfortunately I did see, and now the flaccid *Da*, which has had productions at two resident theaters, then Off Broadway at the Hudson Guild. That production was loudly cheered and has been moved to Broadway where it was cheered again.

The title is the Irish familiar for "father," and I need hardly say more. What else *could* this be but a play about a lovable old curmudgeon? Quintessentially it's the same play as some others of the past decade—not Irish but American and English: Robert Anderson's *I Never Sang for My Father*, John Mortimer's *A Voyage Round My Father*, and Peter Nichols's *Forget-Me-Not Lane*. In Leonard's play, as in the others, a grown man has psychic-emotional ties to his father that he wants to understand and control. In Leonard's play as in (I think) two of the others, the action begins after the father's death. Most of *Da* is either flashback or quasi-fantasy with the just-buried father merrily refusing to stay in the grave, continuing to be visibly present in his son's life. In most of these plays the father is so much more interesting than the alleged protagonist that the author has to compensate by dividing the protagonist into several simultaneously present roles, at different ages. (Even Friel's *Philadelphia* divided its hero in two and *its* most effective scene was with the father.)

In *Da* the one notable difference is that the son was adopted, as a baby. Otherwise it's the same split hero again: the adolescent and the man, now a playwright in London who has returned for the funeral, the same sparring conversations between the split two, the same fundamental sets of relationships between the two and the father. The professed object of this play is to understand the past and lay the ghost of the father. The real object is to squeeze more sentimental ooze out of reminiscence observed by an older self, with easy *Our Town* pathos and with the audience snug in its foreknowledge that the narrator comes out all right in the end, even if bearing the proud scars of additional irony.

Films Worth Seeing

Close Encounters of the Third Kind. Out of briefly stunning film effects, a briefly stunning faith. It even works a second time.

The Goodbye Girl. Neil Simon's best-knit script—for film *or* stage. Herbert Ross directs as cleverly as he did Simon on Broadway.

F.I.S.T. An old-time melodrama, made today, about racketeers—labor thugs instead of rum-runners. Sylvester Stallone is better than in *Rocky.*

A Woman of Paris. Charles Chaplin is not (or hardly) in this 1923 attempt at sexual candor that he directed with some wizardry. Hokey story, but Adolphe Menjou is a diamond.

SK

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Da was a gardener on a large estate so we get his provincialism and sentiment and servility and stubbornness contrasted with the mod grown son. We get the adolescent's first try at sex, unwittingly frustrated by Da. We get, in short, what we deserve for going to see a play called *Da*. The one modest surprise, moderately unsuccessful, is Leonard's attempt to write the grown son's dialogue with elaborately artificial "English" wit, à la Stoppard. ("The dog was poisoned, and in my considered view, it was suicide." "Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the dirt.") At its feeble best Leonard's play fails to reassure us about the resurgence of the Irish Dramatic Movement.

Barnard Hughes, the Da, is an experienced actor and does all with the part that experience without charm can do. Brian Murray, who last year was good if muzzy in *Ashes* (a semi-Irish play), is much more muzzy than good as the grown son. He always chooses the most superficially effective way to say and do everything, then says or does it without clean line. The best performance is by Sylvia O'Brien, as the mother badgered into bad temper; and she's the only one in the cast with a consistent and credible Irish accent. Marjorie Kellogg's set tries to cram a lot of places into one space; cramming is what it looks like. Melvin Bernhardt's staging only emphasizes Kellogg's defeat.

Catsplay (Manhattan Theater Club). More imported sentimentality, posed against the past. This one is about two aging Hungarian sisters, one living in Budapest, the other near Munich, and it begins with a large projected photograph of the pair as laughing girls. A play has to be pretty substantial to justify such an opening blatant appeal to the pathos of time-tug. *Catsplay* does nothing but continue in the same vein of facile theatrics.

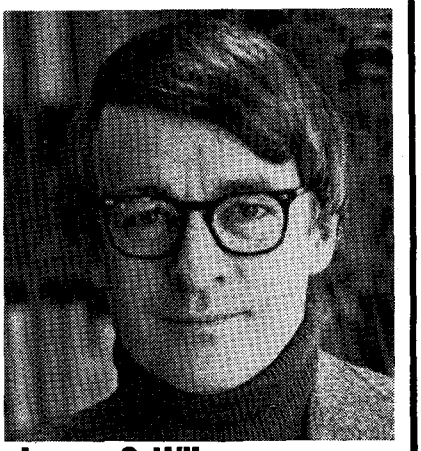
A young Hungarian friend tells me that she saw this play, by Istvan Orkeny, in Budapest and London and that the original, even the British version, had a mordancy (particularly about the sister in Germany) and a general delicacy that have simply been cut or smothered in this version by Clara Gyorgyey. As is, the play's extravagant reception here proves yet again that if glop manages to slop across the Atlantic, it has a much better chance to be treasured than the same stuff exuded domestically.

The leading role, the Budapest sister, is played by Helen Burns, a British-born Canadian actress who has done the play at the Arena in Washington and has made a TV version for the CBC. Burns performs the play with a proprietary air which makes one suspect that much of the reported alteration was engineered to feed her role—in the baldest old "star" sense. This might have its own rewards if Burns were a virtuoso actress, but her virtuosity is entirely of the worst stock-company trickery: mugging responses, mechanically calculated readings, wide-eyed "takes" front-face to the audience. The thin story, which is supposedly conveyed in letters between the two sisters, is about Burns's efforts to keep an old fat lover whom another widow is trying to win away. What wanly possible winsomeness the story might have had is ground into the dust by Burns's Sherman-tank performance. She seems also to have cowed the director Lynne Meadow, who did so well with *Ashes* last year, into helpless complicity.

Michael Ullman on jazz

Betty Carter

Singer Betty Carter has been popular with other black jazz musicians since she began performing. When she visited Copenhagen in the mid-1960s, tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, a tough but sentimental man, met her at the airport. He was holding a bunch of drooping posies and there were tears in his eyes. Miles Davis has spoken admiringly of her singing, and he toured with her in 1958 and 1959. In 1961 Carter was introduced to Ray Charles, and after a tour with Ray, she was asked to record with him for ABC-Paramount. *Ray Charles and Betty Carter* (ABCS-385) introduced her to a large audience that



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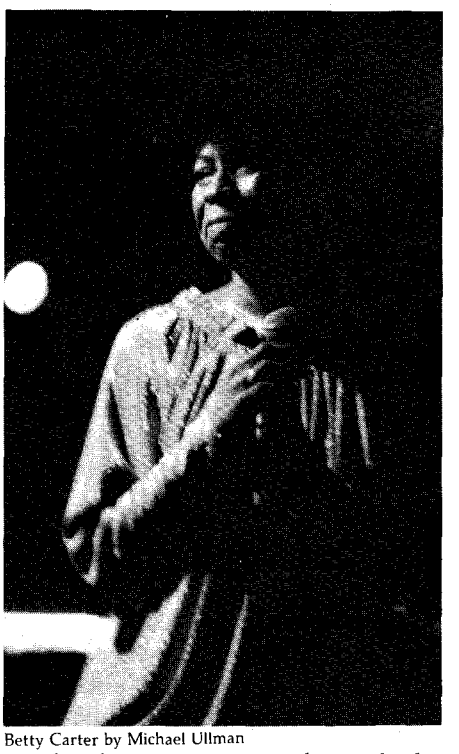
will remember her girlish, innocent and then petulant voice responding to Charles's insistent blandishments on "Baby, It's Cold Outside."

In 1961 Betty Carter had been singing publicly for 15 years. Born Lillie Mae Jones in 1930, Betty Carter grew up in Detroit at a crucial time in the history of jazz. As a youngster she heard Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Coleman Hawkins and Duke Ellington. But she was also exposed to the beboppers. "That was the bebop era too, so all that music was confronting me. Detroit was still full of musicians that caught onto bebop early and supported it. The environment was very good for anyone who wanted to do something with music." She first sang with Miles Davis in 1946 or 1947: "I sat in with him in Detroit before he had even learned to play the trumpet—when his notes were really tit for tat. I had to have the experience of sitting in with Charlie Parker and those guys. When they came into town, I'd be the first one there standing in line—a real fan, but a musician too,. Because music was really growing on me—it was magnetizing me." It was not merely music that was growing on her, but bebop, the newest thing, already getting a reputation for being both a beautiful, difficult form and a music tied to the drug culture.

Betty Carter got her first break when she won a 1946 amateur contest in Detroit: "In that time, when I came up, there was a lot of theaters across the country that had an amateur show night—the Apollo, the Paradise in Detroit, the Howard in Washington, the Royal in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and the Regal in Chicago. There was a lot of theaters for young kids to try out their wares. It was all about show business at that time; it was getting on stage and doing an act. So you had to try out what you could do early and get told one way or another. I just sang and played the piano—I sang 'The Man I Love.'" Carter had a modest musical training. She had taken piano lessons, but more important she calls herself "a natural as far as rhythm was concerned and staying in tune." She had little encouragement from her family, a problem that has stayed with her: "My family right now does not know a thing about what I'm doing. They have no idea. They are just like some of the audience out there that don't know a thing about Betty Carter. I never put myself on them. I left in '51 and there was nobody here on the East Coast. I didn't have anything to offer them: I couldn't say 'Bring the whole family to New York.' So we never got really close and I was never able to call them and brag about what I'm doing."

After winning the amateur contest at the age of 16, Betty Carter started traveling, picking up jobs in black bars and theaters in the midwest. Again, things seemed easier for an unknown in those days: "It's not like today, when the first thing the club owner asks you is 'Where's your record?'" Carter had begun "scatting," the wordless vocalizing introduced by Louis Armstrong and popularized by Ella Fitzgerald. All the bebop singers scatted. "The field was open if you wanted to scat. If you were interested in bebop you had to have a knowledge of improvising and be quick and fast. You had to improvise at the time or otherwise you would just be ordinary."

From 1948 to 1951, Carter toured with the Lionel Hampton band. She stayed because she wanted to learn more about the business and the music, and also because Lionel Hampton's wife liked her. Her relations with Hamp himself were stormy. Leading a band with such young beboppers as Charles Mingus, Fats Navarro and Benny Bailey, Hampton must have felt a little defensive. There's a broadcast recording of the Hampton band at this time (Alamac QSR 2419). In the middle of "Jaybird," Hampton introduces our Betty Carter by her current pseudonym, "Lorraine Carter," and she scats a chorus in the true modern style. Hampton played such bebop tunes as "Hothouse," but he was jealous of the success of Dizzy Gillespie's band—an orchestra that always seemed to be following or preceding the Hampton band in its national tours. Hamp teased his young scat vocalist: "He would do things like get on the bus and ask me a question like 'Hey Gates, whose band you like best, mine or Dizzy's?' And I'd say, 'Dizzy's.'" Soon he was introducing the girl who wanted to be known as Lorraine Carter as "Betty Bebop." "So it was like the name itself was catchy. Nobody forgot it—even though I hated it. And bebop was the thing among black people at that time. Betty Bebop—the young kid scatting with Lionel Hampton." But the "young kid" was restive: she was wary of being identified so closely with the name "bebop," if not with the music, for bebop was associated in some people's minds with the heroin subculture. "I knew I was going to have trouble later. You know, you have foresight. Here's a word that everybody's talking about 'down with!' Which has nothing really to do with the music. Out of that dope crazy world came the most creative music." The name Betty Carter seems to be the



Betty Carter by Michael Ullman

result of a compromise: she took the "Betty" from Ms. Bebop, and the "Carter" from her more elegant pseudonym, Lorraine Carter. Carter stuck out the Hampton engagement, supported by Mrs. Hampton, who saw her potential, and by such figures as Frank and Bob Schiffman, managers of the Apollo Theater. When he was angry with Carter, Hampton would keep her off the shows, but the Schiffmans insisted on hearing her.

During this time, alto saxophonist Bobby Plater was teaching Betty Carter more about music. "It wasn't Hamp's encouragement that kept me going. I used his two and a half years to learn how to write." She learned how to read and write music, how to transpose, and how to face an audience. She also built a following, so that after leaving Hampton in 1951 Betty Carter could get a six-month engagement at the Apollo Bar "right down the street from the Apollo Theater, 125th St. and 8th Avenue . . . At that point I really started getting my music together: my ideas about programming my performances so that it will be interesting to me and my musicians and the audience.' Throughout the 1950s, Carter worked various gigs out of New York, including a job with Redd Foxx in Philadelphia and a "camp show down South with Man Tan Moore, down through Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama—swinging bebop in

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little theaters across the tracks." (Man Tan Moore is best known as the bug-eyed black sidekick in various Charlie Chan movies.)

She was playing mainly to black audiences in the early 1950s, and she felt she was suffering from the "split between white and black music." If a black artist such as Laverne Baker made a commercial hit, it would be "covered" by a white imitator—as Georgie Gibbs covered Baker's "Tweedledee and Tweedledum." As Carter sees it, black audiences were more demanding than their white counterparts, insisting that their artists be themselves. "A style is you—you can imitate somebody else's style. But in that time we dared not imitate. It wasn't easy for us as black people to imitate other great stars and make it. It didn't settle with us. A second Sarah Vaughan would never have the respect of the black community. In the white world, they imitated each other. Stan Getz had a lot of tenor players sounding like him, while he sounded like Lester Young. There were all those girls like Anita O'Day, June Christy, Chris Connor—and they all made it. There were never two Sarah Vaughans, or two Billie Holidays, or two Ella Fitzgeralds. Even in our dancing acts, our shake dancing, our tap dancing acts, we all strived to be our own person. That was my whole background, my whole foundation."

Racially, things started to change in the music business with the Beatles, who along with other British rock groups publicized their debt to black music. According to Carter, "when the Beatles came into existence black music was accepted across the board. It was like it gave permission to every white artist who wanted to do some black material or to approach the black world of music—it was the stamp of approval. Elvis Presley had done it, but he never announced it."

In 1953 Carter made a record for Epic. It is now out of print, but ABC has reissued a set of two recordings Carter made with large groups in 1958 and 1960 (*What a Little Moonlight Can Do*, ASD-9321). Besides Carter's imaginative readings of standards, this set features some of her own compositions. "I Can't Help It" articulates a theme that recurs in Carter's conversation: her need to be herself and to express herself no matter what the consequence. "Have you considered what it does to your soul/You sell it when you play some other's role."

Carter's compositions come straight out of her life. She says about composing that "when the feeling is strong that there is something I need to say musically the melody comes—it just seems to float into my head . . . 'Open the Door' (United Artists 5639) was a tune that I thought of in my relationship with my husband and my kids. I was trying to get him to understand what I was all about, to get to understand me more—why I couldn't give up what I was doing to go for the money. This happened in the '60s—money time." Her husband tried unsuccessfully to get her to sing commercially, arguing that she could resume her "style" after she had made a hit. "I was trying to get him to understand and he never even heard me. He probably hears me now." The song pleads "Open the door, dear, and perhaps you'll find/You've had me on your mind."

Carter is justly proud that she has not compromised herself. When in the late 1960s people continued to ask Betty Carter for a new record and no major company would record her, she started Bet-Car Records. Her style is effective but demanding. She often sings ballads at absurdly slow tempos, bending and rolling each note, using a lot of space and silence. "Spring," I heard her say, "has got me feeling like"—a long pause—"a horse"—another pause during which she opens her eyes wide and the audience laughs—"that never left the pole." A silly lyric becomes a good joke. She has a small high voice, but she likes to sweep down to its throatiest tones. On stage she dances idiosyncratically—her body twists with and accents the music. She is ebullient on uptempo, scat tunes, and affecting on tender, personal lyrics. She is free with written melodies, but careful with words.

Carter admits that her professional life made being a mother difficult. Her sons are now 17 and 14, and their father has been gone from the family for much of the younger one's life. "The difficult part was the mother anxiety about what's happening at home with the kids while the mother's gone. But you got to do what you got to do, and if you're strong enough nothing's going to happen. It could, but that's the chance you got to take." Now she looks back contentedly. "You can't hardly ask any more out of life—to have been doing my own kind of singing. I never tried to do anything else. I was never on welfare. I never quit. I never stopped singing for any length of time." Last summer, Carter received a standing ovation at Newport, after her first performance at the festival. She may be recording another album with Ray Charles, and she is working on her third album for her own label.

This summer Carter will perform at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Her audiences are expanding. Using her favorite metaphor, one might say that recently Betty Carter has been "floating." She feels free: "I'm more musical now that I have been in all my life. Like last night, you see the freedom the audience gave me. If I do something that I know is really musical and I get this wide-out smile from those young kids, it just lets me know how free I can be. Then with that feeling of freedom you can float through your music and they just come running to you. Because jazz is spontaneous. It's a beautiful feeling."

(Bet-Car Records 1001 and 1002 are available from Bet-Car Productions, 117 Felix Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11217. I recommend starting with the second.)

Books Considered

The Gulag Archipelago, Volume III
by Alexsandr I. Solzhenitsyn

(Harper & Row; $16.95)

With the publication of the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* (consisting of parts V, VI, and VII), we now have the whole of Alexsandr Solzhenitsyn's monumental labor.

How are we to sum it all up? First, no doubt, that it has had an almost unprecedented, world-wide impact on the minds of men. When Solzhenitsyn started assembling the material over a

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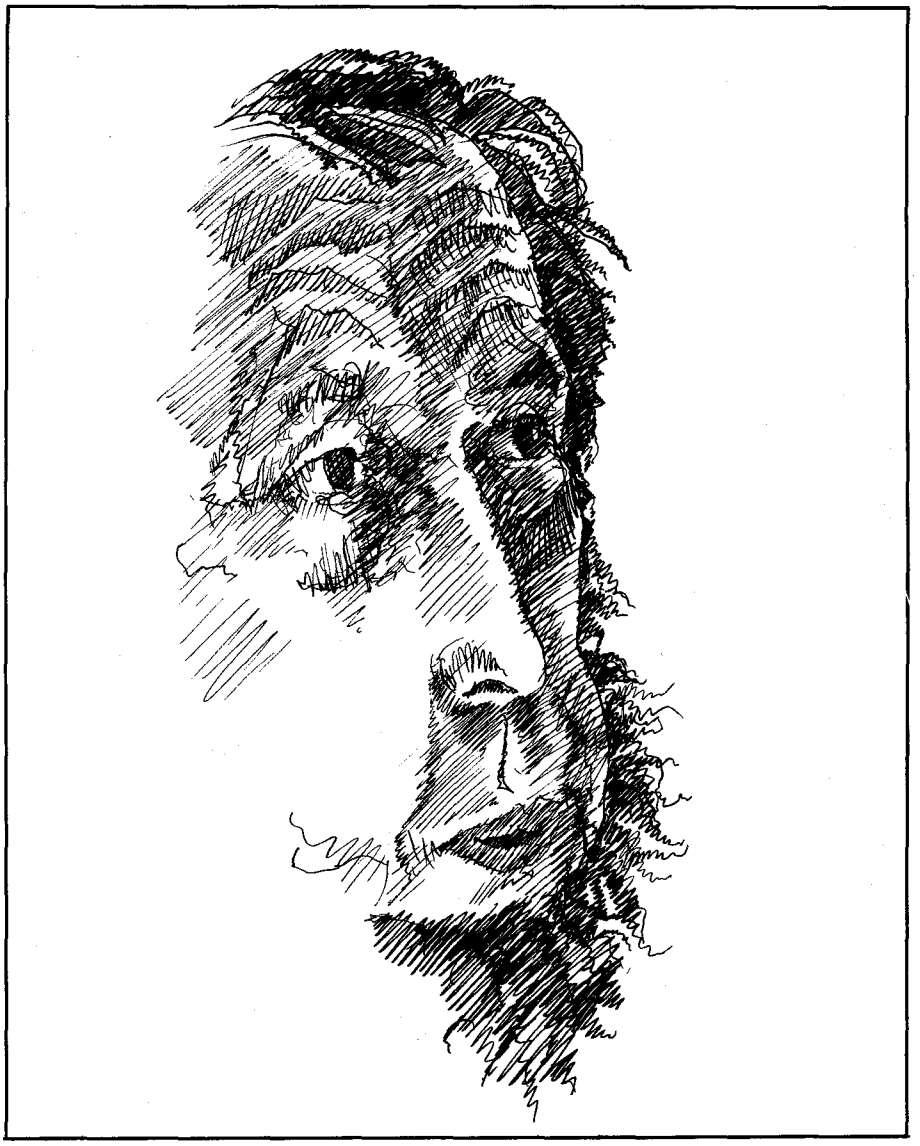

Alexsandr Solzhenitsyn by David Schorr

decade ago in Russia, secretly but with the collaboration of scores of confidants, it was simply a matter of undertaking a devoted duty. And this without any guarantee at all that the material would ever appear. At any point, the manuscript or much of it could have been confiscated, and destroyed in the furnaces of the Lubyanka. At any point, Solzhenitsyn himself could have been arrested and been unable to finish his work. In pursuit of this uncertain hope, he nevertheless undertook the immense toil which has resulted in these three huge volumes. And it is the world's good fortune that his toil was not fruitless.

The main result has been that it is now no longer possible in any country with reasonably free publication for the Soviet system to find serious defenders. It is not that some of the offenses of Stalinism were not well known in a general way much earlier. But it has been this vast human canvas with its myriad details and its single sweep which has provided the white-hot catharsis, at every level, needed finally to purge most of the clinging remnants of false ideas, inappropriate sentiments, stubborn partisanship about the USSR. The word *Gulag* has entered the language—every language.

In France, the effect has been particularly striking. Over the past few years we have seen, for the first time, the crumbling of the old delusions of the intellectuals. The incredible deceptions and self-deceptions by which Sartre and all the others indoctrinated the intelligentsia had been impervious to the presentation of facts, and to the advancing of logical arguments by a handful of distinguished analysts like Raymond Aron or polemical attacks on their whole way of thinking by independent men like Jean François Revel. It remained true that a climate of conformity pervaded the intellectual classes, that every *bien pensant* professor, student, journalist, writer held, in a way too automatic to be called a belief, that even if the USSR or similar systems had their faults they were nevertheless imbued with a central virtue which made them superior to the wicked West.

The sudden disintegration of this new Age of Faith, the swift dissipation of the tenacious miasmas which have hung over the French mind, have been truly astonishing. This has largely been the work of a group of young philosophers whose starting point had been the great left-wing protest of May 1968, but who had meanwhile been subjected to the immense shock of Solzhenitsyn and *The Gulag Archipelago*: that and that alone, as they themselves make absolutely clear, produced their change of heart and mind. For this single achievement in one country alone, its testimony to truth would have justified itself.

Meanwhile this last installment retains its interest, and fills in new elements in the story. In Part V Solzhenitsyn tells of the resistance within the camps. First, the individual escapers, and finally after Stalin's death, in 1953-54, the great wave of camp mutinies. It was now, for a couple of years, that the Archipelago experienced its one period of relaxation. During this brief interlude the prisoners were actually addressed as "men." But the morale of the Secret Police, temporarily shaken by the terror maestro's death and the shooting of his Lord High Executioner Lavrenti Beria, soon returned.

It is an ironic fact that by the time of Khrushchev's open political attacks on Stalinism, from 1956, this great bastion of the Stalin system had already been restored to its old rigor. Solzhenitsyn tells us that even he thought that the system he described in *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was coming to an end.

He was horrified to find that among the letters which started to reach him after its publication in 1962, "on crumpled scraps of paper, in a blurred pencil scrawl, in stray envelopes often addressed and posted by free employees, in other words, on the sly, today's Archipelago sent me its criticisms, and sometimes its angry protests . . .: What do you mean, never happen again? We're here inside now, and our conditions are just the same! 'Nothing has changed since Ivan Denisovich's time. . . .'"

Camp conditions were in fact getting steadily worse—a process marked by an attack in the official *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, August 27, 1960, on any relaxation, and calling for "hard and strict conditions" for prisoners. But a facade of

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reasonableness and even liberalism was preserved in Khrushchevian circles proper. One of the most fascinating sections of this volume is Solzhenitsyn's account of the time when he was in good odor and under Khrushchev's personal protection, and was actually asked to make suggestions for the improvement of labor camp regulations. The bureaucrats had to be polite, but still managed to reveal the petty nastiness of the whole police interest and effectively argued against every relaxation.

Nevertheless there had been many releases and rehabilitations. The return of survivors who started trickling back from the death camps is described in a fine ironic passage—with such scenes as their meetings with the men who had denounced them, the false witnesses, former camp guards and commandants, even their interrogators, flourishing in good jobs or on comfortable pensions.

In some cases, attempts were made to see that notorious denouncers—such as members of the Writer's Union who had sent scores of their colleagues to death—should be punished. But it was not even possible to get them removed from the Union, let alone fired from their jobs or expelled from the Communist Party, even though the Criminal Code provided a short term of imprisonment for false denunciation. Meanwhile a project for paying compensation for the years of imprisonment to the admittedly innocent had to be abandoned when it was found that it would cost the state. They settled instead for two months compensation.

In Part VI Solzhenitsyn describes another great pillar of the regime: "free" exile, affecting in particular the millions of peasants of the collectivization period, and the eight nations, numbering a million and a half, deported en masse—men, women and children—in the 1940s. Written with his usual concentration on dramatic detail, his account of the collectivization terror against the peasantry in 1929-32, in particular, is in its way the best description of these horrible events which has yet appeared.

Solzhenitsyn gives in Section VII an account of the present relation between the State and its subjects, starting with the most detailed and dramatic story yet published of the 1962 workers' insurrection in Novocherkassk—the first of many—and its suppression by tanks and infantry; and going on with other representative facts such as the persecution of the Baptists.

He reminds us in an afterword that he is completing his work on a double anniversary, 50 years after the Revolution and a hundred since the invention of barbed wire. He argues that, above all, it is necessary to understand of the Archipelago "how closely akin it is to the state, and how necessary to it." Or, as he sums up the entire book, "Rulers change, the Archipelago remains. It remains because that particular political regime could not survive without it. If it disbanded the Archipelago, it would cease to exist itself."

The last section has an epigraph from the Book of Revelation, "Neither repented they of their murders. . . ." This was strikingly confirmed at a ceremonial meeting for Soviet Army Day on February 22 this year, when 6000 of the elite were assembled to hear a speech by Defense Minister Dmitry Ustinov, and interrupted twice with prolonged applause when he mentioned Stalin. Though so many of his murders and falsifications had long since been exposed publicly in the Soviet Union itself, this clearly does not matter to the ruling class. The "deStalinization" of which so much has been said has failed to take.

Robert Conquest

Robert Conquest is most recently the author of *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camp* (Viking).

Thomas Hardy's Later Years
by Robert Gittings
(Atlantic Monthly Press; $12.50)

An Essay on Hardy
by John Bayley
(Cambridge University Press; $14.95)

Without the benefit of jubilee or centenary Thomas Hardy continues to be read and appreciated—not least by young readers—more than most major writers of his time. We are now presented with the second volume of Gittings's carefully compiled biography, a necessary companion both to the novels and the poems, and a sensitive essay by the Warton Professor of English at Oxford, itself illuminated by biographical insights. It suggests, as the blurb puts it rather cryptically, that "the rewards of reading Hardy are greater today than ever, although they are not necessarily those which the reader expects to find, or has been taught to look for."

It is not certain that Hardy would have approved of this way of putting it. The phrase "taught to look for" smells of the classroom, and certainly there have been many academic critics in the past, including the most influential, who have treated Hardy with condescension. General readers, like the enthusiastic viewers of a recent English television serial of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, will take what they find with less self-consciousness. The stories are gripping, the characters date less than the social settings in which they move, the language is memorable, often deeply moving, there are frequent variations of pace, even of direction, and running through everything is an irony which is far more congenial today than order of system. Nor is it only general readers who respond or have responded in this way. Virginia Woolf and Siegfried Sassoon were two earlier 20th-century writers who fell under Hardy's spell, while Wilfred Owen hailed him comprehensively as "Keats & Christ & Elijah & My Colonel & My Father-Confessor & Amenophosis IV in profile."

Whatever Hardy would have thought of Bayley's invitation to surprise, he would certainly not have approved of Gittings's resolute attempt to strip away carefully deposited layers of myth in an effort to discover what actually happened to Hardy as public honors were showered upon him. It was not merely that Hardy was capable of withdrawing completely from view—even in the presence of visitors—but rather that he deliberately misdirected seekers after the truth. There was as much tortuous if gripping fiction about the account which

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he concocted of his own life as there was in any of his novels, and in order to prepare this account he drew his second wife, Florence, into what at times must have been a profoundly distasteful conspiracy to produce a false (and uninspired) biography. Hardy's first wife, who comes out better from these two books than she did from many earlier books, had a very difficult time too. As Bayley puts it gently," one may doubt if Hardy was the marrying kind; his younger sisters and brothers never took the step."

Not surprisingly Hardy (unlike Virginia Woolf) kept no diary, although he had a notebook which included references with a very wide range from Comte to the *Dorset County Chronicle*. He sprinkled his novels with allusions and quotations, yet the raw material of his writing is never to be found there. Gittings suggests that Hardy may have been capable of realizing in poetry what he could not realize in life, yet Hardy found it necessary to be extraordinarily circumspect even in introducing his lyrics, emphasizing what he once called "the sense of disconnection, particularly in respect of those lyrics penned in the first person."

The lyrics enabled him to say things which he could not easily say in his novels, and he was very uneasy about observers and critics who surveyed his novels without looking at his poems. Poetry for him represented "the heights," prose, "the lowlands." It is, nonetheless, this "disconnection" which Bayley seizes upon as the secret of Hardy's success as a novelist. Starting with the text of the novels, Bayley argues that it was "like a landscape of which the component parts—cows, birds, trees, grass—pay no attention to one another, although they appear as a total composition to the beholder, the reader." Even the syntax sometimes "seems not to know what other clauses and phrases are about." The disconnection was personal, however, rather than contrived. Hardy, according to him, took refuge in a division of roles—"the private, the literary, the social, like a deer in the thickets." In consequence, he could be "vulnerable" both in his poems and his novels. Exposition always carried with it the threat of exposure. If there was a difference between the poems and the novels, it was that in the former Hardy was always "naturally and consciously present" while in the latter he frequently gave the impression of "a man who would rather be silent than speak." One got the sense of "a private person in a public place."

Bayley's useful distinction between Hardy as a "noticer" of people and things—Gittings refers to him less flatteringly as "eavesdropper and voyeur"—and Hardy as a professional

Thomas Hardy Courtesy of The Granger Collection

man of letters committed to describing and interpreting what he overheard and saw encourages him to find "rewards" in Hardy different from those which *he* had been taught to look for. In particular, it leads him to a refreshingly favorable reassessment of Hardy's early novels—this is the most original aspect of the essay—and a less favorable—and less convincing—reassessment of *Jude the Obscure*. For Bayley the later novels, which marked the end of Hardy's career as a novelist, displayed "a greater rigidity, a methodological build-up instead of deflections and relaxations."

Gittings is not concerned with such unconventional reassessments, and as far as the novels are concerned is content to record contemporary comments, sometimes with hidden exclamation marks. He rightly implies, however, that the relationship between Hardy the eavesdropper and voyeur and Hardy the great man of letters was more complex perhaps than Bayley suggests. Hardy dealt with public as well as with private themes, particularly in *Jude*, and anyone who wishes to understand the remarkable way in which he straddled two centuries must look carefully at the public themes he chose to write about as well as at his private techniques for withdrawal or concealment. The centuries are often thought of as contrasting centuries, with the 20th being in revolt against the 19th. Hardy forces the historian to reconsider this convenient arrangement just as he forces the critic to reconsider the literary merits of "disconnection" against those of "coherence." Hardy was not a historian, but few other novelists, to draw a further distinction of J.H. Plumb, had such a strong sense of the past. Before he concocted myths about himself Hardy delved deep into the history of his own family and of his own locality, and produced myths there too. He could escape myth altogether, however, in touching upon some of the central social and political issues of his own day. Like many other late 19th century English writers, he was uneasy about the conventions which supported mid-Victorian society and culture. No other writer, however, directed attention so clearly to the fact that these conventions were only variants on conventions which held over far longer periods of time.

No other writer, moreover, had a stronger sense of the relationship between history and natural history. He knew that he belonged to both. It was not in *The Dynasts*, his would-be epic of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, but in his earlier lyrical poem *The Souls of the Slain* that he expressed what he felt most directly:

And the spirits of those who were homing
Passed on, rushingly,
Like the Pentecost wind;
And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned
And surceased on the sky, and left in the gloaming
See mutterings and me.

In the privacies of nature Hardy felt a sense of communion rather than of solitude, and in the world of history too he wanted to be a prophet, not a hermit. Wilfred Owen was wise to include the name of Elijah among his list of aliases.

Bayley is hard on John Fowles, who was strongly influenced by Hardy in his 20th-century bestseller *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. It is true, as Bayley suggests, that the differences between the two novels bring out the differences not only between two novelists but between two centuries. Yet there were aspects of the 19th century which Fowles appears to have understood better than Bayley, and it is impertinent of Bayley to suggest that "as a writer Mr. Fowles has no relation to society at

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all: he merely gives it his views." There are many comparisons of Hardy with other writers in Bayley's essay—some of them, like those with George Eliot, are perceptive and telling—yet the essay as a whole does not have a strong enough sense of period. Hardy himself may well remain elusive. His first wife once called him "my eminent partner." And strained though their relationship became she knew better than we ever can.

Asa Briggs

Asa Briggs is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford.

Garfield
by Allan Peskin
(Kent State University Press; $20)

The Garfield Orbit:
The Life of President James A. Garfield
by Margaret Leech and Harry J. Brown
(Harper & Row; $15)

At 19, with Geauga Academy closed for the colder months so that its pupils could teach in district schools in Ohio, James Garfield sought vainly for a teaching post in the Western Reserve. There were none, as 1849 was an unprosperous year. Discouraged, he looked for farm work, or carpentry, as canal jobs would be few until spring thaw. Again he found nothing, and went home, only to find a man from the village of Solon riding up to his door to offer him, unsolicited, a teaching position for four months at 12 dollars a month. "The coming of this man confirmed me in the opinion that place-seeking was not in my line," Garfield later wrote; "and I have never asked anybody for a place from that day to this." Although his recollection of never having sought a job since was inaccurate, there was no question about his abhorrence of vulgar place-seeking, and time after time he would let a coveted opportunity slip by rather than campaign for it. Even the presidency would come to him in 1880 despite a display of diffidence which made it doubly ironic that he would be assassinated, after only a few months in office, by a disappointed job-seeker.

One of the least-known of our chief executives, Garfield is now the subject of biographies published within four weeks of each other. (There was earlier, in 1970, *Garfield of Ohio*, by John M. Taylor.) Inevitably there is overlapping, but the strategies and the intentions of each are very different. Allan Peskin aims at the definitive biography, dense with detail, rich in capsule lives of individuals important to his subject's career, traditional in its cradle-to-the-grave narrative. Margaret Leech's aims at using the focus of the presidency to create a social history of the post-Civil War era which culminated with Garfield. In many ways her book (completed after her death by Harry J. Brown) is a bridge between her *Reveille in Washington* and *In the Days of McKinley*, and has the same lively readability. However the surprise is the lucidity and wit of Professor Peskin's prose. Peskin's interest is in politics and politicians; Leech's is in personalities. Leech also appears to have had access to—or at least used—more family documents than has Peskin, although his are the fuller accounts of Garfield at war and at affairs of state. Further, Peskin integrates his quotations from Garfield's letters into his text while Leech and Brown supplement their more brief text with an appendix of 45 Garfield letters. Both writers fall into cliché here and there, and Leech's prose is a bit old-fashioned at times while Peskin's seeming unwillingness to drop any details can be as wearying as it is usually illuminating. But we now know the 20th president, warts and all.

Is one biography to be preferred over the other? It depends upon what one wants to know. For Garfield's love affair, not only before his marriage but intermittently, for years after, with the pretty and proud Rebecca Selleck, we need to go to Leech. Peskin also observes that it clouded the early years of Garfield's marriage, but the details are in the other book. For the public man, his career in the House nearly foreclosed by

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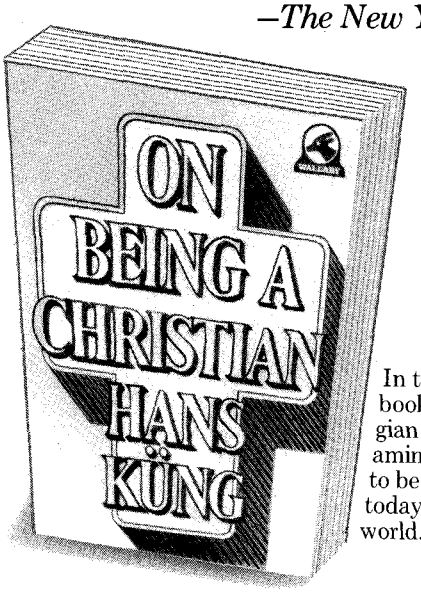

In this controversial book, noted theologian Hans Küng reexamines what it means to be a Christian in today's challenging world. 79010/$5.95

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his involvement in the DeGolyer paving and the Credit Mobilier railroad scandals, about which he testified less than honestly, again the biographers agree,

Lithograph cartoon by Currier & Ives of Garfield's 1880 presidential campaign. The Granger Collection.

but the details are to be found in Peskin.

What is most interesting is to examine where the biographers differ in interpretation of facts known to both. When Garfield became president and needed a full-time private secretary, his loyal part-time secretary of his congressional years, George U. Rose, was certain that after many faithful and underpaid years he would be given his reward. Garfield had other ideas, according to Peskin. In order to elevate the post the president "needed someone with more glamour than loyal, lackluster old Rose—someone, in fact, like John Hay. But Hay . . . had no desire to go back to the same post he had held 20 years earlier under Lincoln." Garfield turned to an old crony, Lionel Sheldon, who bluntly told his old friend that he wanted a job that paid more money. Meanwhile it began to dawn on Rose that he was to be jettisoned, and he reproached Garfield with memories of happier days together. "All this is like a dream to me. You have lavished the warmest expressions of friendship, you promised me at the earliest opportunity to take me wholly with you and pay me a much better salary. . . . Through all these long years you have often placed your hand upon my shoulders and sympathized with me because of the late hours I have worked. . . . Your little ones have called me Uncle. . . . I am indignant. I am hurt. . . . God grant that your administration may be a glorious success. I am of small account compared to that, and shall quietly, but with a broken spirit, plod along."

Garfield chose the 24-year-old Joseph Stanley Brown (the hyphen would come later), who had proved useful during the campaign. Garfield's daughter Mollie, then 14, was ecstatic. (When she came of age the pair were married.) Harry Brown, who wrote the final chapters of *The Garfield Orbit*, observes that Rose—a Treasury clerk—was not paid regularly for his part-time services, adding that "This curious situation suggests that Garfield was Rose's patron in respect to his continuing employment by the government. Rose also seems to have looked forward to a time when Garfield would deal more generously with him." But Brown writes that in 1881 the new president "seems to have concluded that [Rose] was not qualified for the position. He was willing to give him a lesser place in the White House office, but Rose was not to be appeased. Garfield was greatly distressed to receive from him a bitter letter. Relations between the two men came to an end." Brown does not quote from Rose's reproachful letter.

The suggestion from the one example for which there is space is that Leech and Brown are more kind to their subject, who had as many flaws of character as other American presidents, and like other presidents was less than sincere in many of his dealings and less than honest in his public statements. Yet the differences are largely differences in density of detail. Garfield is more flawed in Peskin's biography because that account is twice as long and can accommodate more information. And the more we know about a human being the more the facade crumbles.

An ambitious, self-made man, overshadowed throughout his life—and often dominated by—such more flamboyant and even more overtly ambitious politicians as John Sherman, James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling, Garfield achieved what they sought in vain, and then paid the price. Exposed to office-seekers in ways from which modern presidents are now insulated, he was the victim of the office he had sought so circuitously before he could make his mark in it. Thus what neither biography can tell us is what kind of chief executive Garfield might have been, although his problems in balancing expediency and talent in patching together a cabinet—a task which absorbed all his time until the very day he was inaugurated, as the compromises, one after another, became unstuck—suggest a less than forceful personality. All one can guess, with the hindsight of our knowing that he was preceded by Andrew Johnson, Ulysses Grant and Rutherford Hayes, and succeeded by Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison, not to mention William McKinley, is that he would not have lowered the level of the post-Civil War presidency.

Stanley Weintraub

Stanley Weintraub's most recent book is *Four Rossettis* (W&T/McKay).

Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of TET 1968 in Vietnam and Washington
by Peter Braestrup

(Doubleday; $8.95)

Did excessively gloomy reporting by American newsmen of the TET 1968 Communist offensive help lose the Vietnam war?

Peter Braestrup properly shuns this dubious premise as "highly speculative." While accusing the media of painting TET as a disaster for the allies instead of a serious setback for North Vietnam, he is careful not to exaggerate the impact of this "gross distortion." So he comes up with a somewhat milder premise: the bad coverage by itself didn't drive Lyndon Johnson out of the White House or drastically change the course of the war, but did have sharp repercussions on domestic politics in a clamorous election year. Braestrup won't be pinned down, but he suggests that the specter of military disaster raised by the media caused so much shock that Johnson was led to proclaim a

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partial bombing pause of North Vietnam and propose peace talks with Hanoi, just to placate the doves.

Had the news been less distorted, less bleak, Johnson might have waited for Hanoi to make the first peace move, Braestrup speculates; whether the eventual outcome then might have been something less humiliating than the sudden collapse of South Vietnam in 1975—two years after Nixon's "peace with honor" enabled the withdrawal of the last American troops—the author doesn't say.

One thing he is sure of: the performance of the major news organizations during the February-March crisis of 1968 was an extreme case of journalistic excess. Braestrup deplores what he calls a new "volatile" style of news presentation, a style often marked, he says, by "mindless readiness to seek out conflict, to believe the worst of the government or of authority in general, and on that basis to divide up the actors on any issue into the 'good' and the 'bad.'"

And he concludes with the warning that unless this "volatile" journalism is cooled the government—either the courts, the Federal Communications Commission or Congress—will "apply remedies."

Big Story is an ambitious survey of how the newspapers, wire services, magazines, radio and television covered the pivotal climax of an unpopular war. The author quotes hundreds of dispatches and television scripts. He finds errors of fact, errors of omission, lazy analyses, ill-formed analyses, and worst of all, a chronic tendency to pessimism.

Here one is tempted to speak up for the pessimists. Wasn't a strong dose of gloom the precise antidote for the rosy illusions promoted by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to sell their escalating involvement in an unnecessary war? Suppose the few correspondents who were in Saigon before the American troop commitment had exposed more starkly the weaknesses of the Saigon regime and its feeble prospects—even with massive American aid—of prevailing against an indigenous Communist-led nationalist revolution. But of course no newsman in Saigon in 1962 ever dreamed that his government would be lunatic enough to send half a million troops to Southeast Asia. He was that innocent. And he didn't want to be a Premature Pessimist.

Unfortunately for Braestrup's indictment of the media, the examples he cites of TET reporting often come a lot closer to reality than the official communiques and briefings. Eyewitness combat reporting was generally accurate, he concedes. He particularly admires the first-hand reports of the bitter three-week battle to retake Hue, written when the communiques were blandly dismissing the action as a "mopping up."

The author points out however that the excellent reporting was the work of a handful of "genuine" war correspondents" from a polyglot corps of 179 American newsmen that included long-haired hippies, "vagabonds" and neophytes who couldn't tell a mortar from a howitzer. Braestrup is a former infantryman (Korean war) and has a low level of tolerance for what he calls the "fringe element" in the press camps.

He tries mightily to be fair. He finds no evidence of an "ideological conspiracy" against President Johnson or the administration's war policies. Despite the open anti-war editorial stance of some newspapers, notably *The New York Times*, he detects no overt pressure on correspondents to conform to the editorial line. Whatever biases might have crept into *New York Times* stories were those of the correspondents, not of the editors, he writes. And while bias may have slanted the selection of stories for Page One prominence, Braestrup believes the choice was molded more by a "widely-shared predilection for 'disaster' stories" than anything else.

Braestrup examines the mental attitude of newsmen on the eve of TET. Hawks were few, he recalls, and outspoken doves were rare. Enthusiasm for the Vietnam venture had all but vanished, administration credibility was low. In the preceding months Johnson had launched a euphoric propaganda campaign to shore up support for the war. American officials in Saigon were under White House pressure to present the war in a favorable light. Accordingly General Westmoreland said he was "absolutely certain" the enemy was losing. Ambassador Bunker was happy about the pacification program: 67% of the natives were "under government control." As usual Deputy Ambassador Robert Komer was relentlessly upbeat. The Pangloss of Pacification consulted his computors and agreed with his boss that 11.5 million of South Vietnam's 17.2 million were now living in safe towns or under "reasonably good security conditions in the country."

That these statements bordered on delusion was proven at the very outset of the TET offensive when enemy forces filtered with ease through the supposedly secure countryside to strike well-coordinated blows at Saigon, Hue and other targets throughout South Vietnam. Newsmen woke to find the war swirling around their doorsteps in downtown Saigon. They could witness daring but abortive attacks by Communist commandos on the Presidential Palace and the American Embassy. From that moment on many newsmen in Vietnam and Washington would reject as false any official claims of "progress." Braestrup believes that was why much of the TET coverage "reflected subjective reactions by newsmen—not only to the slights and circumstances of TET itself, but also to the administration's past conduct." He suggests that many Washington correspondents, embarrassed at having swallowed the progress line, with its promises that no more nasty surprises were in store, became unduly resentful: their primary reaction after TET was "to indulge in retribution for prior manipulation by the administration." Ironically, at a rare time when the White House, "shocked into relative candor," was putting out fairly credible statements, the newsmen were now willing to believe any criticism or interpretation that showed Johnson's Vietnam policy in the worst light.

Braestrup himself confesses that during the heat of the Saigon battle he found himself "willing, even eager, to believe the worst." Fortunately the fog lifted quickly for him, as it did not for some newsmen who "grew a sour determination to counter official blandness with exposure of the mishaps and the horrors of the war—which had a ready market at home."

According to Braestrup, newsmen began distorting the TET story right from the start. He makes much of the fact that the Associated Press, in its early accounts of the Saigon fighting, erroneously reported that the Communist commandos had gotten *inside* the Embassy Chancery: a "gross exaggeration"; they only reached the front lawn. He says newsmen were too preoccupied with the Embassy raid and neglected more significant battles, especially at

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Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base where enemy sappers invaded the runway and were finally routed with the arrival of American armor.

But who can fault the reporters for staying downtown? The Embassy was the prime symbol of the American presence in Vietnam. It was supposed to be "terrorist-proof." The mere fact that enemy sappers were able to breach the wall surrounding the four-acre Embassy compound, invade the grounds and engage the Marine defenders in a six hour fight before being liquidated—with the help of American troops landed by helicopters on the Embassy roof—made quite a story.

Braestrup says the dispatches should have emphasized enemy failure. "Hanoi did not claim a victory—psychological, symbolic, or otherwise," he notes. "But American newsmen were quick to award Hanoi a major 'psychological' triumph there, if only because they—the newsmen—and Lyndon B. Johnson had been taken by surprise. It was a portent of journalistic reactions to come."

Photograph by © Mark Godfrey (Magnum Photos)

Well, not all the newsmen, and certainly not the wire service and TV reporters, could wait around six hours for the final returns to come in. They had deadlines to meet. Their first hurried dispatches could reveal little more than the basic facts: the Embassy was under attack, fighting was going on inside the walls of the compound. That was sensation enough, all of it true. Only one reporter put the enemy inside the main building. As for the "psychological victory" which the stories and headlines certainly implied, Ambassador Bunker himself agreed that the Vietcong had achieved a considerable psychological impact in both Vietnam and the United States.

The ambassador's remarks came three days after the attack. Bunker claimed that the enemy had suffered a "substantial military defeat" in its attack on the cities and had failed to attain its self-proclaimed goals of a general uprising, wholesale defections and surrender of the South Vietnamese Army, and collapse of the Saigon government.

Braestrup notes that the ambassador's views did not get much attention. Maybe this was because Bunker's claims of enemy casualties seemed vastly overblown and because under background briefing rules he could be quoted only as "a senior American official." Editors were getting leery of anonymous spokesmen.

This touches on the main point of Braestrup's indictment. The author insists that by mid-February the newsmen could have seen for themselves that the enemy offensive had run out of steam. He charges that they did nothing to set the record straight but left the shock and confusion of the early weeks fixed in the public mind. As late as March, *Newsweek*, CBS and NBC were still giving Hanoi the initiative, he says, although by that time the Americans were on the defensive only at Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh, a mountain outpost manned by 5000 US Marines and 300 South Vietnamese Rangers, had been under siege since January 20. It was subjected to daily shelling and had to be supplied by air. The siege had a peculiar fascination for news media—and for President Johnson—because it suggested a disaster scenario: a repeat of the debacle inflicted on the French garrison at Dienbienphu in 1954 by the same Communist General Giap who was masterminding this offensive.

The disaster scenario paralleled Dienbienphu: Giap would overrun Khe Sanh, dealing a crushing blow to Johnson's war policies just as the fall of Dienbienphu shattered French hopes of holding IndoChina.

The disaster did not occur, Braestrup notes, because Khe Sanh was never in dire peril. It could be resupplied and reinforced by air. It could be supported by long range artillery from another American base. It was not under continuous assault. Enemy mortar, artillery and rocket fire were sporadic and never as heavy as at Dienbienphu. Finally it was supported by massive air power: B52s dropped 11,000 tons of bombs, equal, Braestrup says, to five Hiroshima-type atomic bombs.

Yet even when the siege began to wane the media continued to speak of impending disaster. Braestrup notes: "By emphasizing Khe Sanh so heavily, many in the media appeared to believe (and suggest) that the foe was still exerting heavy military pressure throughout Vietnam long after that pressure had in fact eased." The military significance of Khe Sanh was overemphasized, he suggests, because the story "filled a journalistic need."

Braestrup makes other strong and valid charges. American newsmen vastly overrated the enemy: "One searches in vain . . . for indications that the enemy's planning, tactics, execution, zeal and weaponry were less than flawless." He says that television, with its need for dramatic film, focused on urban destruction and the plight of refugees and gave the impression that the whole country was steeped in devastation and despair. He faults the media for generally ignoring the performance of the South Vietnamese Army. Contrary to expectations, that army didn't fall apart under pressure. It even showed "stout resistance" at times. None of its units defected. Only a few were overrun.

A cynic might object: If ARVN were that good, how come it collapsed so suddenly in 1975, melting away in the face of the final enemy offensive, yielding Hue and DaNang virtually without firing a shot; and in the process of that evacuation, abandoning one

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billion dollars worth of US materiel?

Big Story is an abridged paperback edition of a two-volume hardcover published last year by Westview Press in cooperation with Freedom House. Peter Braestrup was a correspondent for *The Washington Post* when he covered TET. He is now editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*, published by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian Institution.

Homer Bigart

Homer Bigart is a former foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*.

Doing Good: The Limits of Benevolence by Willard Gaylin, Ira Glasser, Steven Marcus, and David Rothman

(Pantheon; $8.95, $2.95 paper)

Anyone doing research in the medical and behavioral sciences is only too aware of the increasingly strict codes governing the treatment of research subjects. Safeguards are being tightened, the benefits and risks to research subjects assiduously scrutinized, the rights of subjects, informants, respondents articulated. The process of human protection is neither capricious nor perfunctory. If risks to people are perceived to be too great, a chunk of research may not be funded (although a nuclear power station may be built 10 miles away).

The procedure and philosophy underlying the rights of human subjects are themselves not at all insignificant. Yet the context in which they must be considered may be even more important. For the context, really, describes the limits of benevolence. The context reflects the desire to do good for someone, even if doing good has a patronizing or oppressing effect. Welfare does good, or ought to do good. Yet, welfare policies and practices, while supplying certain people with basic living requirements, in fact may perpetuate poverty. They most certainly have the effect of keeping people beholden and dependent. Welfare may provide sustenance while stripping people of their rights. The same could be said of the practices of many nursing homes, mental hospitals, prisons, reform schools, orphanages. In the bestowing of benevolence, in the acting—alas, that phrase—in the best interests of a person, one often evades the consequences of one's own benevolence. In looking myopically at one's seemingly humanitarian deeds, one may avoid the psychodynamic, sociological and historical underpinnings not only of one's benevolence, but of the act of keeping people dependent and powerless.

Doing Good provides one of the most articulate statements on these underpinnings, and on the limits of benevolence. As these authors themselves document substantially, English and American cultures have devised too many ways of holding people in servitude and rendering them hopelessly dependent, childlike, always under the banners of social reform, progressive political ideologies, economic amelioration. Willard Gaylin's focus is on the ineluctable psychobiological dependence of the child on its parents, and the temperamental ramifications of this most early life stage. As "the least instinctually fixed animal on earth," Gaylin writes in his essay, the "human being is most needing of care." But care is not something one proffers mechanically. The act of caring, its intentionality and that which it communicates also contribute to the child's development. For care, paradoxically, may help the child to mature just as it may retard maturation. Gaylin's distinction between the intrinsically dependent, those people literally unable to care for themselves, and the extrinsically dependent, those "individuals made dependent by artifacts of our culture," becomes one of the cornerstones of the three other essays constituting the volume.

The distinction is picked up by Steven Marcus, whose essay, "Their Brothers' Keepers," reviews what could be described as the origin of English poverty. The piece is stunning, though utterly tragic. Quite remarkable, really, how the English, as a result of legislation, social reform, the build-up of industry, a growing capitalism, and the omnipresent protection of the gentry class, brought into existence a wholly viable and stable *system* of pauperism. Quite remarkable too, Bentham's and Malthus's contributions to what emerged as the birth of the dole. Those who have followed the historical evolution of poverty know the law of 1834 to be the legislation that established for good and always, seemingly, the administrative machinery we recognize today as the welfare system. As grotesque and degrading as the workhouses were, as inhuman as the treatment of children, and adults for that matter, came to be, the voices of dissent were not inaudible in England. Wordsworth and Dickens felt the swell of this nouveau pauperism, and the ugly machinery of government that ground people down as it arranged for them to survive.

Marcus's essay is followed by David Rothman's "The State as Parent," a vivid overview of contemporary progressive social reform movements. Elegantly, Rothman introduces the theme of an abiding moralism, as America's private sectors struggled to support and protect its faltering public programs for schools, jails, widows, children, the elderly. The paternalism he portrays in programs like PINS—Persons in Need of Supervision—assumes almost comic proportions. Could people of goodwill honestly have believed in their so-called benign policies of human rehabilitation? Could they ingenuously have attributed purity of motive to their policies directed at regulating the poor? What was the overall effect of America's growing populism in the last century which gave birth to a distrust of all authority? And finally, what was left of human liberty after the waves of altruism and benevolence receded? Rothman's rich essay concludes with references to contemporary civil rights movements, movements which awaken questions of individual and collective interest. He wonders about adversarial positions in the attainment of civil rights, just as he questions the role of the courts and lawyers in ultimately adjudicating not only human rights, but human needs. "Will we as a society," he ponders, "be able to recognize and respect rights and yet not ignore needs?"

Doing Good's final essay is Ira Glasser's "Prisoners of Benevolence." Harking back to Gaylin's discussion of dependency, Glasser addresses the issue of liberty in the context of encroaching governmental power, or what Bernard Bailyn wrote about in terms of the devouring tenacity of dominion.

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Government, as the Jeffersonians agreed, was an adversary of individual liberty, even if Jefferson himself did little to stifle powerful governmental incursions into human rights during his own presidency. Nothing, perhaps, reveals government's encroachment on human liberty more than America's dazzling growth of social service institutions. And, as Glasser observes, social service was a deduction of the poor, motivated by the best of intentions. The state would help, act as parents if need be, and somehow foot the cost of adults thrust, in an almost caricatured sense, into the role of children. Government would even request and gain assistance of lawyers, doctors, ministers, teachers.

In discussing the deplorable conditions extant in all too many nursing homes, Glasser finds occasion to posit six fundamental statutes of freedom. They include the right to control property, as well as one's own body, the right to come and go freely, the right to free speech, association and counsel, access to information, and due process. The terms are equally appropriate for movements supporting the rights of children, prisoners and welfare recipients. His overarching principles meant to guide reform include the enforcement of constitutional limits and advocating that a program "designed to help the dependent ought to be evaluated not on the basis of the good it might do, but rather on the basis of the harm it might do. Those programs ought to be adopted that seem to be the least likely to make things worse."

What is being considered in this book is human inequities and liberties, dependence and autonomy, and the language is hardly the righteous and commercial rhetoric all too often heaped upon us. Also under consideration in *Doing Good* is what might be called the tyranny of good intentions, a tyranny which bespeaks its own morality. Lionel Trilling's colossal phrase in "Manners, Morals and the Novel" should touch us all: "Some paradox in our nature leads us, once we have made our fellow men the objects of our enlightened interest, to go on to make them the objects of our pity, then of our wisdom, ultimately of our coercion."

Thomas J. Cottle

Thomas J. Cottle's most recent book is *College: Reward and Betrayal* (Univ. of Chicago Press).

The Back of the Book

Misinformation Please

There is a kind of person who, if in the course of love-making, were to hear his love playfully whisper "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" would stop everything, bolt upright, and point out to the lady that "wherefore" does not mean "where" but "why." Accordingly—he would explain—it makes no sense to ask "wherefore" out of context, since Juliet was asking Romeo why he had to be a Montague. (The feuding families, you see.) Finally, as his love would be walking out the door in a daze, he would show her that misquotation led to her error. She would never have made such a mistake had she remembered that in the text of the play there is no comma after "thou."

This same kind of person often reviews books or writes letters to editors. As letter-writer he will note that while he agrees with every point and argument made in this or that article, he nevertheless was (either "dismayed" or "outraged") to see that the author had attributed the phrase "Go west, young man" to Horace Greeley, whereas ("of course") the phrase had been coined by John Soule in the Terre Haute *Express* ("1851").

As a reviewer he will complain that he was enthralled with John Keats's "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer" until he came to the line in which Keats mistook Cortez for Balboa (or, as subsequent research suggests, Antonio d'Abreu). After that, the poem was ruined for him.

For just such a person was conceived *The Dictionary of Misinformation* (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1975). This remarkable book is the work of Tom Burnam, who, from his lively tone and writing style, does not at all seem the kind of fellow for whom he labored. Yet Burnam has provided a feast for the mind bent on accuracy at all costs. If, for example, you believe that in the most famous sea battle of the Civil War, the Monitor fought the Merrimac, prepare for a shock.

I confess I was in for more shocks than most people when I first came across Burnam's *Dictionary*, because I make more errors of fact than most people. I don't know if I ever deeply believed that porcupines shoot their quills, but I certainly enjoyed picturing the event. I was dead sure that the word "posh" was an acronym for "Port Outward—Starboard Home" until I read otherwise. I was equally sure that a parsons table was so called because it looks spare and simple, not because it was developed by the Parsons School of Design.

The book is full of such riches, which I would display here were not the exercise one that would begin in astonishment and end in depression. Instead, let me repeat that Burnam's *Dictionary* represents a fascinating feat, and at the same time urge you to burn the first copy you see.

The danger in works like the *Dictionary of Misinformation*, or the impulses that go into them, is not that they encourage nit-picking, but that they discourage happy error. Bad enough to break stride in the heat of passion to point out the difference between "why" and "wherefore." Worse, to have no lover or high school humorist ever again recite the "O Romeo" line without placing it in the proper context. Misinformation—and I do not say this solely for self-protection—has great value. A world without it would be as prosaic as the real last words of Nathan Hale.

What would life be like if everyone knew that Panama hats come from Ecuador, that french fries come from Belgium, that Garbo never said "I want to be alone."

How would big children impress little children if it were common knowledge that Hitler's real name was not Schicklgruber, that Marie Antoinette did not say "Let them eat cake."

Eventually Marie Antoinette's name would disappear from popular discourse because we would have nothing else to attach it to. Ditto for Louis XIV who did not say "L'etat, c'est moi"; for Barbara Fritchie; for Mrs. O'Leary and cow. In short, not only would our language lose lustre, without misinformation; it would also lose some of its oldest friends.

Finally, consider the friends themselves. Think of the opossum to whose name is inaccurately owed a unique species of cleverness. Were the possum to be removed from discourse merely on

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the grounds that it does not play dead when cornered, the animal's self-esteem would be reduced to zero. Moreover, the removal of its name would also remove a human activity which is conveyed by no other expression (there is no humor, no wiliness, in "playing dead"). If the world could no longer play possum because the possum can't, both it and the possum would be sadder, and no wiser.

The *Dictionary of Misinformation* cites the expression "Drop the gun, Louis" as an example of gross misinformation because Humphrey Bogart did not actually say that in *Casablanca*, but said "Not so fast, Louis," instead. Yet the best example of the practical value of misinformation also occurs in *Casablanca*, when Bogart is asked why he came to the city in the first place. He says he came for the waters, and his interrogator asks: "What waters? We're in the desert." "I was misinformed," says Bogart.

Here's looking at you, babe (kid?).

Roger Rosenblatt

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Washington Diarist

New Museum

This is a glorious First of June for Washington, and the rest of the nation can be jubilant with it. With the opening on that date of the new East Building of the National Gallery of Art, the capital seems suddenly to be more finely dressed than before. That one building should make such a difference may seem improbable, but then its design has come from the clear imagination and genius of I. M. Pei, and its location is at one of the crucial points in the scheme of the city, where the showiness of the Mall comes at last to an end, and one's eyes are led up to where the Capitol sits gravely on its hill. It is a point at which one's attention should be arrested, where there should be a punctuation mark. When I was conducted around the building before it opened, my heart sometimes raced at the sheer excitement of it, and then seemed to stop beating at the brilliance with which it comes near to the ideal. I smiled at its aëriness of spirit, grinned at some ingenious solution to a problem, laughed at its own joyousness and then fell speechless at its exultant beauty. If you do not believe me, come to Washington, even just for the day, if you can. You will sing with rejoicing all the way home.

When I had left Pei's building, I recalled some words of André Bonnard which, in spite of the risk of the comparison, I think can be used without engaging in hyperbole. "What does one think of," he asked, "in face of the Parthenon? We must not pretend or invent. We think only of being happy, and we have more strength to be happy. This is because we love it as we love a living creature." It is indeed as a living creature that this new building makes us love it at once; and it does indeed send us away, as surely an art gallery should do, with more strength to be happy. One walks through it reveling in the joy and confidence in the human spirit that seems not just to fill but to flood it with light. It is impossible to be solemn about art here. If we are alienated and distraught, as so much of our culture tells us, one would not know it from these stones. Someone once said of the perpendicular architecture of the 15th century that it "sings man's exultation in his power to create a thing goodly to look upon." Not only Pei and his partners, but all those associated with the new gallery, have shown that in the 20th century we still have the power.

Pei seems to have an unfailing ability to look at a piece of ground and see the building that would spring naturally there, if buildings did in fact spring from the earth. When I lived in Boulder, Colorado, I used to go now and then to the building that Pei designed for the National Center for Atmospheric Research. It sits by itself on its mesa at the foothills of the Rockies, a daunting site for any architect. One can either drive up to it, in which case it disappears from view as one winds one's way up the mountain, or else one can walk to it through the woods and ravines of the foothills, unable to see it until one breaks into the open on the mesa. In either case, suddenly it is there, in front of one; and for all the world, one cannot imagine it not being there, as inevitably as the boulders thrusting up around it. It is miraculous only because it does not seem to be a miracle. The same is true of the awkward trapezoidal site with which Pei had to work in Washington. How could one build well on it? Yet how could the building he has now built on it be anything other than it is? It seems to inhabit its site. Those of us who have watched it rise day by day during the past three years have had our moments of doubt. When it was half built, it seemed too heavy, squat, almost an affront. But as it rose further, its beauty rose out of it. If it seemed misshapen while it was still building, that was only because the final form Pei had envisaged was perfect. Perfect, that is, for its site. Pei does not break ground in the sense of founding new schools of architecture—no thought of modernism or postmodernism here—he breaks ground to let the building that is in it grow out of it.

It is not for me to turn architecture critic and describe how he has done it. How he split the trapezoid in two. How he then built two buildings on it in which he uses a strict and intricate geometry of hexagons. How he uses the sharp angles of the site to make his own angles so knife-edged that sometimes they are no more than 20 degrees. How he has joined the buildings by a central court. How this court soars 57 feet from the ground level and 71 feet from the concourse level to a spaceframe skylight. How two great bridges cross the court and carry the eye in leaps from plane to plane. How in what seems from the outside to be an almost windowless building there is a flood of daylight. How. . . . How. . . . How. . . . One could write a book on this building no less than on a cathedral. If there are still people who complain that it cost $94.4 million, then they cannot have eyes or souls or laughter in them. On one of his last visits to the almost complete gallery, I am told, Pei gazed down on the center court and exclaimed: "I want to see the people here. I want to see the people in it." He can rest assured, the people will come. From all over, and for centuries they will come, and go away and remember him always.

John Canaday will be writing about the art that is shown in the new building. When I was there, only some of it was in place: a series of small rooms, for example, with small French paintings, the bequest of Ailsa Mellon Bruce, which is exquisite like a blush; the huge but not daunting bronze sculpture by Henry Moore at the entrance; a 30-foot tapestry by Miró, green and red and blue and yellow and black, which hangs in the central court; and a vast mobile by Alexander Calder. All the artists who were commissioned to do special works seem to have outdone themselves. But it is the building itself that makes glorious this First of June. The public architecture of Washington is too often monumental and mute; this is on a great scale but is never inhuman or frozen and it speaks freely. One can hardly believe that the same age in the same city has produced the totalitarian architecture of the new Library of Congress annex—to take only one recent example in the capital—and this lofty building, so open that it makes the human spirit seem also more open and free than in all this dark century. For the ultimate genius of the building is that all its axes and planes seem to be prolonged out, out, into the trees and the lawns, and up, up, into the sky and scudding clouds. They take us with them.

H. F.

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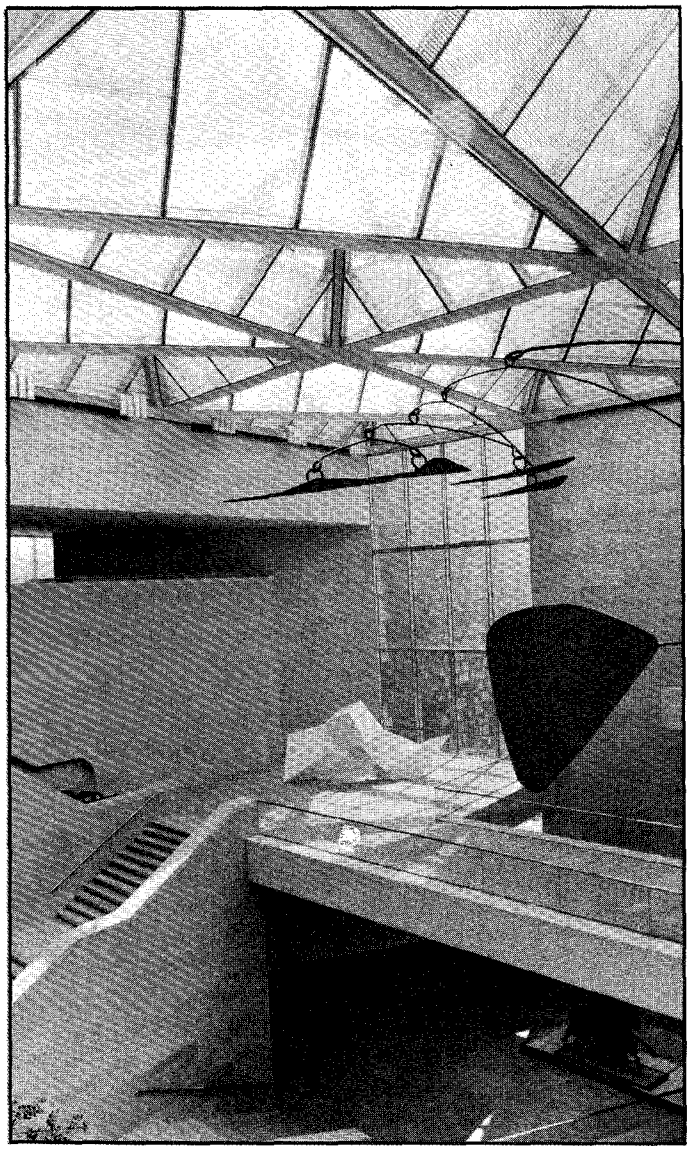
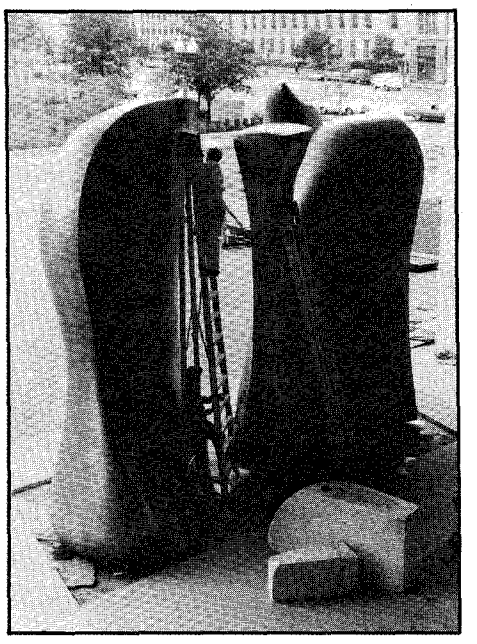
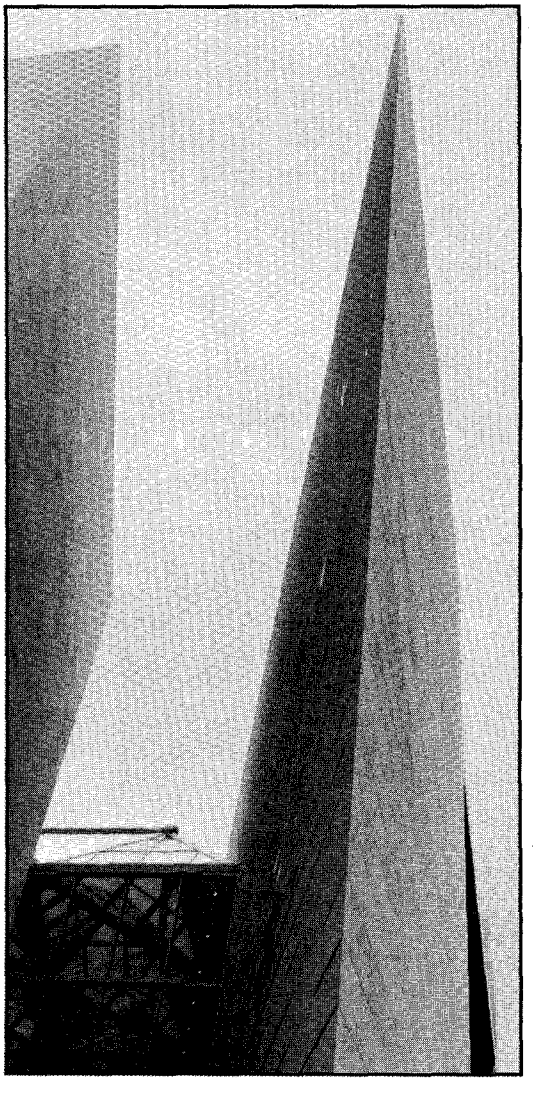
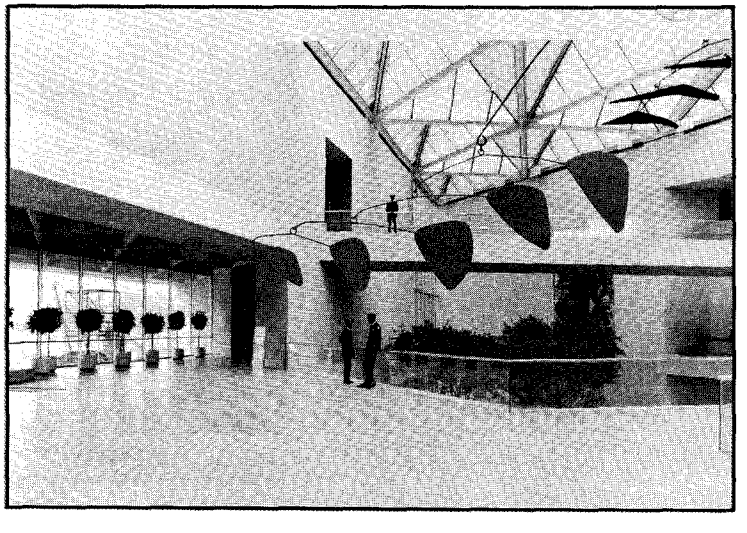
The East Building of the National Gallery of Art

Photographs by Jeff Vinson









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